



THE DEVIL'S
DISCHARGE

WILLARD FRENCH





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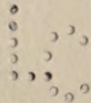
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BY
WILLARD FRENCH ✓
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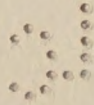


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THE DEVIL'S DISCHARGE

CHAPTER I

A LITTLE glove-button,—one of the old-fashioned kind,—completely upset me. It drove me from important research in one of London's superb laboratories. It forced me into traveling almost fifty thousand miles, devoting years of life,—involuntarily and even unconsciously,—to the downfall of the devil. It quit my glove as I was leaving the club to catch a train on the London and Dover Road at two o'clock one stormy winter's night. With the precaution not uncommon in bachelors—near forty—I stopped to pick it up. A fellow going out behind passed me, taking the last cab waiting at the club stand.

Common sense would have turned me back to the telephone, but obstinacy is another prerogative of bachelors. Assuring myself that the joy was mine, I upped my umbrella, hurried along the Strand, shortcut the distance by climbing the stairs from Faringdon street, and came out at the lower end of the Holborn Viaduct bridge.

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The solitude was appalling. Besides the rain it was the one hour when London sleeps,—between late cabs and early carts. Not a living thing was anywhere. The wet street glistened like ice in the glimmer of the lamps. Across the bridge stood the dripping bronze groups of Commerce and Agriculture. The illuminated clock, beyond the tower of City Temple, looked like a fog-soaked moon. Beyond the bridge blinked the four lights about the equestrian figure at the end of the Viaduct. In the opposite direction a blurred glow indicated the front of the railway station.

A cab swung suddenly in between me and the four lights. It swayed, and against the lights I could see the driver's arm as he lashed the horse. Both horse and cab were rubbered, for they made little noise; but as they approached me one of the windows burst with a startling crash, followed by a woman's half-stifled scream. It behooved me to leap for the horse's head and catch the bit; but I did it so drastically that on the slippery pavement he went down in a heap, taking me with him, flinging the driver from his seat,—pretty well killing him,—and demolishing things generally. It was a bungling job, for I was much

better accustomed to chemical complications; and extricating myself, rather shamefaced, from the front of the wreck, I saw two men and a woman emerging from the back of it. One of the men said:

“No noise now. Don't shoot. Break his damned neck for him.”

I was unmixing my foot from the lash of the driver's whip, and taking the hint, I gave the heavy handle a quick swing, bringing the solid butt fair on the hatless head approaching me. The man dropped, and the other, finding it too late for precaution, fired several shots at me. He did not realize,—nor did I,—that they reached the mark; for as I upped the whip again, and made for him, he left the woman and ran. She was gagged. As I pushed the cloth from her mouth she said, calmly:

“Will you kindly unbind my hands?”

I tried to, but my fingers were numb, so I knelt and took one end of the cord in my teeth. As the knot loosened I started to stand up, but the next I knew was some weeks later, in a hospital.

CHAPTER II

WHEN returning consciousness set my will to work I made a quick recovery, for I was beautifully nursed by gentle-fingered, soft-voiced things in white, with never less about a patient to retard convalescence. I had no family anxieties nor fear that any one could usurp my laboratory. I was not even curious about the Viaduct incident,—about the woman, or how she got out of the mess, or how she got into it. Yet there was something constantly hectoring me. My eyes would persistently remain fixed on the door of my room. Whoever opened it gave me a pang of disappointment till, after several days, the pang changed to a sudden and most disconcerting thrill.

To realize one's divinity after near forty years of Eveless Eden must in any case be different from the discovery when Youth and Love are hand-in-hand upon an eager quest; but this was altogether different. It was a disruption of all my arrangements, and I re-

sented it. A bachelor,—especially a chemical laboratory bachelor,—falls easily into prearranged methods; and not only was this something not in my formula, but, to the contrary, in it was my firm conviction that women were not very safely to be loved, if peace of mind was a desirable contingent.

The fact is the woman was so divinely right that through the mists of delirium my eyes had learned to watch for her and my soul to wait for her. They had taken advantage of my helplessness to defy the cardinal convictions of my life, and it angered me. Instantly I set myself to correcting the error and studied her carefully, to that end, as she approached. She wore a matron's badge, but her uniform was even simpler than the nurses'. She had a glorious figure, grandly controlled. Her face was an artist's dream. She had wonderful eyes. To see them was to forget the rest,—only that it would not be forgotten. The glow of health in her face was richer and darker because it was crowned by an irrepressible mass of hair,—snow white,—scintillating as white clouds scintillate at sunrise. She was entirely too young for it. Something drastic must have accomplished it; but the wrath of God

was praising Him, for it enhanced her beauty. The outlook was discouraging, and I shut my eyes. When she sat down by my cot I turned my head away. She touched my forehead. I could have bitten the hand,—or kissed it frantically. She spoke. The voice was like the woman; but it was simply a duty speech, because she was head nurse. Stroking my forehead she said:

“At last you are well on the way to recovery. It was a hard fight, but you fought it splendidly. Your grand constitution and your strong will pulled you through. You will soon be as sound and as well as ever in your life. Your courage saved a woman in a serious plight. She is waiting till you are well enough to listen, to try to put her gratitude in words.”

As roughly as I could I said: “I am not responsible if what I happened to do accidentally helped a woman. I prefer not to see her.”

My ears followed her as she went away. She spoke in a whisper to the nurse and the nurse replied, “Yes, Madam.” It was not till long afterward, and far away, that I learned, by accident, that she had any other name. I

could have torn my eyes out that they obeyed me and remained shut till she was gone. Yet what did it signify? Open or shut they saw nothing else. Beautiful woman can accept no less than adoration from man, and man can offer nothing more. To have men fall at her feet was doubtless a common experience. The rebellious way in which I fell may have amused her; but the fact that I fell at all unutterably disconcerted me.

But as persistently as before every nerve in me waited on that door, and disappointment on whomever opened it; for she did not come again till I was practically well, dressed and sitting in an armchair at an open window, trying to utilize the incoming spring to drive out my thoughts of her. Then the door opened and without turning I knew that it was she. I heard the nurse go out, leaving us alone. I would not look, but my hands clutched the arms of the chair lest they fly to meet her. I knew that it was only another duty call, to tell me that I was to be discharged; and of all things earthly I did not want to leave the hospital. The thought of life where I could not watch that door was misery. I dreaded waking in the morning to find myself somewhere

else. Leaning on the back of my chair and touching my forehead, she said:

"The doctors will let you go home in the morning. Your valet has been notified to have your rooms ready. A nurse will go with you for a week. Then you will be quite well again. I hurried to tell you the good news."

"It is not good news," I said, rather sullenly.

"It is pleasant when patients like the hospital," she said; but I interrupted, "I am not thinking of the hospital."

To my confusion she replied, "I am only a part of the hospital." And after a moment she added: "It would be so much pleasanter—for me—if you went away thinking life brighter and better worth living, instead. Remember your work,—how much you have accomplished for the world and how much more you have to do. Think of what you would say to another man who let thoughts of a nurse at a hospital disturb him."

She was usurping arguments that I had worn threadbare. It only tempted me to drop them.

"You do not belong here. You should not be here," I said.

"It is my world, my sphere," she answered quickly. "I am only happy when trying to make others happy, relieving their sufferings."

I tried to rise, but she laid her hands on my shoulders.

"Till to-morrow you are my patient and must obey," she said.

"But you do not understand me!" I exclaimed.

"I understand," she said, quietly.

"But I love you," I whispered, catching her hand and pressing it to my lips.

"I know it," she said. "And I am sorry."

"You mean because I am your patient? Because it is what no patient of yours could help doing?" I was angry.

"I shall go away if you talk like that," she said gently. "Listen, and I will tell you how I know. While you were very ill I was in here a great deal; for there were reasons why I was most anxious that nothing should be missed which could call you back to life. A hundred times when you were half-conscious you told me that you loved me. I do not believe that it is a word you have often spoken, and I believe that it means more to you than to

many. But I knew that if you had been well and conscious, you would not have let yourself come near to thinking it,—much less to saying it. I knew that when you were yourself again for your life's sake you would combat it, and to help you to conquer yourself I kept away when you were out of danger. It would be different if I could love."

"I am not a fool," I interrupted. "I am not bidding you love me. Of course you do not love me. I am only telling you that from now on I shall live in the one hope that some day you will—"

"Hush! hush!" she whispered. "Never! . . . Never think that thought again. There is good reason why I would not hurt you. It is not my wish. Only it is true. I cannot love."

"You mean that you cannot love me?"

"Love any one."

"Because you love some one already? Because you are—"

"No, no. I do not love any one. I am not married. Don't ask me more. If you understood you would know that it is true. Simply I cannot love."

"That is absurd. A woman as lovable as you would not be incapable of loving."

"It is not absurd. Pity me for it if it will help you; but please believe me and respect me."

"What do you mean by 'respect' you?" I asked. For she seemed to give the word a special significance; and it came from her lips with a sob.

"I mean by wholly ignoring me after you leave the hospital," she said; "unless a time should come when I could render you some service which does not pertain to love. Respect me as one who is dead,—whose memory is a pleasant ray of sunshine to brighten dark hours for you. Respect me as a white rose, without a thorn, which would fill the air with fragrance for you whenever you need it most."

Her voice seemed wet with tears, and I replied: "I will. But I will do it to prove to you that I love you. And by my love, if I can merit it, you shall yet come to me with open arms and say to me, 'Beloved, I can love you now.'"

Then, for an instant of ecstatic Paradise, one beatific glow from Heaven flashed,—one

glorious glint of blue where black clouds broke. Her lips touched my forehead.

I sat alone in the open window till the nurse brought in my lunch, with a perfect, fragrant, spotless, unresponsive white rose lying on the tray. As I took it up I noticed that the stem was without a thorn.

The next morning, making his farewell call, the doctor told me that a dozen times over I owed my life to the incessant watchfulness of the head nurse; but he warned me that if I mentioned it in any way to her it would be most offensive. That was all. It was only a score for the glove-button.

CHAPTER III

BACK in my quarters, back in the laboratory, back in the fever of living, there was nothing new but two scars, where bullets found their way into me, and a faded white rose without a thorn,—faded, all but its fragrance, its astral, subconscious fragrance. But that fragrance would mysteriously fill the air, regardless of my occupation, making my heart throb and my brain stand still, while I felt and saw only the woman I worshiped. Its recurrence increased till I was sinking into a state of mental uselessness. Sleeping or waking I saw only that superbly beautiful face. The melody of her voice was in everything. Everything whispered to me of her. And when at length I found myself haunting the streets about the hospital at night, to be nearer her, I rose in wrath and said to myself, "I'll take you so far away that you will have to brace up and be a man."

The result was a passage on a slow tramp steamer on the longest voyage available.

There I tried to reason with myself, but there was no reason in me. Everything whispered to me of her. First the gulls followed us,—mottled and striped, with creamy breasts and plaintive cries, down-swooping almost to my touch or hovering strong and still above me, bending their heads in fearless confidence to look down at me, so near, so unapproachable,—whispering to me of her. Then the brown cape ducks took their place, with dark wings almost touching the waves as they rose and fell with them, in absolute self-reliance,—whispering of her. After them came Mother Carey's Chickens, long-winged, silver-tipped, stormy petrels, laughing in weird chirps at the raging monsoon,—atoms in immensity, but masters still,—whispering of her. Then flying fish all alone gleamed and glistened, bronze-winged silver darts shot from the sunshine for an instant and disappeared,—whispering of her. Then nothing anywhere for long tropical days but the cloudless sky and the waveless sea; and the ship, cradled and caressed on that perfect but passionless breast, because in its helplessness it was there, seemed a picture of myself—and of her. Then up from the south came the great majestic alba-

tross to meet us; his monstrous wings always stretched motionless upon the air, gliding swift as an arrow, high or low, backward or forward, regardless of the way of the wind and without a tremor of exertion, in imperturbable sovereignty of the air,—whispering to me of her.

When I went ashore at length it was simply because the out-voyage was over and I must wait for the steamer to return. Nothing was gained and the persistent hint of a mental breakdown was torturing me. Mightily I longed for some friend upon whom I could lean for a moment, while he laughed me,—or even kicked me,—into common sense. Solitude is the acme of agony to one who has become for himself bad company. Till then I had rather enjoyed my own society and little ever disturbed me; but after an hour in my room at the hotel the great bell of the Post-office clock, booming the quarter hours to eternity, drove me frantically to the street. There, drifting with the crowd, I presently found myself at the entrance to the great Town Hall. It was Good Friday night, and the huge place was filling for a philharmonic concert. The construction of the hall was peculiar. Two

broad aisles crossed each other at right angles, four-quartering the place. I was given an end seat in the front row of a rear section. Diagonally across from me, the next to the end seat in the last row of a front section was occupied by nothing less than a monstrosity.

No wonder the seats on either side were vacant. It was a lad of sixteen or so,—just a mass of wriggling muscles. His long, thin fingers were tangled up in knots. With a squirming fist he held a program on his knee and turned the pages by pawing it with the other fist. That he turned them intelligently was the more astonishing because the opening part was the *Stabat Mater* and the lines were in Latin. His large brown eyes rolled about in an agony which made them seem the windows of a lost soul in torment. His face and even his scalp were constantly twitching.

It is cruel, but there's a fascination in watching such an unfortunate, and I could not distract my attention till late arrivals,—two gentlemen and a lady,—came toward me from a side entrance, to turn up the center aisle. The gentleman and lady in advance were of sufficient importance to cause considerable commotion; but my eyes fastened irresistibly

on the man who followed them. At the close of the concert I asked the doorman who he was. Without a moment's hesitation the man replied: "A stranger in the city, sir. I never saw him but once before,—some years ago, at a function in this same hall. He came to-night with Lord and Lady Annandale."

The man could not have told how it was that he remembered him so well, nor could I have told what it was about him that caught and held my attention. He was athletic in build, with dark hair touched with gray, heavy eyebrows and mustache, and quick, dark eyes. His face was strong and agreeable. But he impressed me most as a reservoir of potential energy. A startling sense of acquaintance came to me at the first glance, though I was sure that I had never seen the face before. Then the contrast between him and the monstrosity recalled the latter, and I thought: "If you would only sit down in that end seat you might lend some of your surplus nerve power to the poor fellow across the aisle. Let him but touch the hem of your garment, and—"

My thoughts were suddenly checked, for just as the man turned up the center aisle he hesitated, looked at the wriggling thing, and

sat down beside him. Immediately, however, he became absorbed in the concert, without the slightest indication that he was conscious of the other's existence, though it came wriggling nearer and nearer till it was literally nestling under an arm which, purely for his own comfort, he had thrown over the back of the next chair. And gradually the contortions subsided till the lad, motionless from toes to finger tips, lay pathetically against the strong form. His thin, white hands rested on his knees. A smooth, pale face, with parted lips and beautiful brown eyes, showed the keenest appreciation of the prima donna that was singing. The head sank upon the stranger's shoulder as if the cup of comfort was running over. But the stranger watched the prima donna, returning in response to a recall, as if there was nothing else in the world worth while. She sang, as encore, a song which was new then and had not lost the best of its beauty in its own fatal popularity. She sang "The Holy City," and the vast audience sat breathless as the clear contralto reveled in the grand refrain,—

"Jerusalem! Jerusalem! Lift up your gates and sing Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna—"

A shudder, not like a nerve tremor, but fierce and strong, shook the man I was watching. It was like the way men cringe in the clutch of death, as I have seen them dying on the battle-field. For the first time he showed a consciousness of his companion. No mother ever touched a baby's curl more tenderly than he lifted the lad's head from his shoulder and left it resting on the back of the chair. Then he dragged himself to his feet and staggered to the door. As he turned into the aisle I caught one glimpse of his face. Great God! that anything in Heaven, earth, or hell could have produced that transformation. It had in it all the horror that an hour before was in the eyes of the monstrosity. It sent wild thoughts of mystic theories of vicarious suffering flashing through my brain.

When I looked again at the lad across the aisle his eyes were fixed in a vacant stare, like some one waking from a dream. A cringe contracted his face. A spasm twisted his body and the lost soul,—devil or what,—returned, as the great hall rang with that last triumphant strain,—

“Jerusalem! Jerusalem! Sing, for the night is o'er!
Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna forevermore.”

CHAPTER IV

IT was no less a miracle for me than for the lad. For an hour at least my brain had been free from that haunting whisper; and I realized an intense desire to lean on the man, as the boy had leaned, till I, too, had regained my self-control. By nature I am the farthest in the world from the leaning kind, but it took such a hold on me that when I saw him on the street, on Easter morning, I almost ran to overtake him. As I came up behind him a woman, just ahead, was turning into the Cathedral, dragging after her a child which was evidently a hopeless idiot; and the thought went through my brain:

“Idiots fascinate you as you fascinate me. You have strength to give away. They need it; so do I, in my present condition. You don't want to go in there, nor do I; but you will follow that boy and I shall follow you.”

It proved quite correct; for after a lingering, rather reluctant puff he threw away a cigarette and entered the Cathedral. I found

him sitting on a bench close under the pulpit, with the boy between him and the mother, and I secured for myself a secluded place behind a pillar, shutting off any view of the pulpit, but giving me an opportunity to watch the three.

Feeling sure that I was about to witness another miracle, I studied the child, that I might fully appreciate it. It was one of the rather frequent cases of congenital deformity, where the skull was too small for the brain to develop. There was an expressionless, fat face, with a shapeless little mouth from which the tongue protruded, apparently from lack of room inside. The eyes were so deeply buried that they could open only wide enough to disclose the pupils drawn together, evidently of little use in seeing things. The mother was one of the tired, threadbare, working kind, who loved her boy with animal instinct, and had dragged him to the Cathedral for the Easter mass, hoping there might be some resurrection grace, even for him. In her silent prayer her hand moved toward him as if she were trying to point him out to One supposed to see the sparrow fall and to order all things well. The man sat absolutely im-

passive; yet twice I saw the seat beyond vacated by men who had grown pale and restless there, and who left it with expressions of fear. When the procession came down the aisle the priests and choristers singled him out and bent their heads to stare at him, for the moment forgetting the chant. The mother felt it, too. She glanced toward the child, but his head was turned away from her. She shivered, crossed herself, and, kneeling, buried her face in her hands, on her book and beads.

The man alone seemed utterly unconcerned. He was all-absorbed in watching the head of his cane, as he turned it slowly half way round and back again. And then the miracle. The boy's tongue disappeared and his lips parted in something like a smile. A fat little hand gently patted the stranger's knee, and two eyes, —not open very wide, but steady and straight, —looked up into his face. And still he sat watching the head of his uneasy cane, as if it was the only thing in the world worth while.

Hearing the voice of the priest in the pulpit beyond the pillar, I closed my eyes, to help me fix my attention on the sermon. Naturally the text was: "I am the Resurrection and the Life." In slumbrous periods he repeated as-

sertions which have only changed enough to meet the fashions of changing ages, since first the consolations of Christianity began to torture stricken souls. Soon he was saying:

“All things emanate from Almighty God, and are according to His infinite pleasure, whether to break in pieces or to make whole. In His boundless love He visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation. Those whom He loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son in whom His soul delighteth. Dearly beloved brethren, are any of you afflicted? Remember, it is by God’s kind hand and by His loving will, and but an evidence of His eternal love; the wise and holy means by which He would call you from the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity to the bosom of His blessed Son, our Lord, who died for us that we may live, and rose again to be our resurrection and our life.”

My mental comment was painfully inelegant. For it I blush; but applying the words to the boy who was most in my mind, I said to myself: “What rot! If that fellow who seems so capable of miracles would take his eyes from his cane and fix them on the priest,

I wonder if he could not drive some sense into the sermon." But the discourse ran on:

"Human hands cannot help you. It is only through the grace of God that you can find relief. And whatever may be your affliction, as His minister I charge you, on this blessed Easter morning, to put your faith in—"

There was a sudden pause. It startled me into opening my eyes. They rested full upon the stranger. His cane was still. He was evidently looking at the priest. Then, almost instantly, the word which followed the pause, making it just a little more emphatic, was "Science."

It gave me an uncanny chill, for mentally running ahead of him in his stilted sentences, knowing of course that "God" was the word which was coming next, and thinking still of the mother and the child, I had said to myself, "How much better it would be if he would tell them to put their faith in science."

After that the sermon lacked the easy swing of pulpit oratory, and as it limped along the same uncanny impression continued, as if I half knew, in advance, what each new word would be.

“Science is the voice of Omnipotence to men,” he said, “the only delineator of the divine. Science is God,—the God that lifts from afflicted humanity the cloak of suffering, that conquers the curses of heredity and rescues from evil the offspring of parentally-broken law. Nature is full of accidents and blunders,—the inexorable effects of overreaching law,—and science alone can guide and curb and rectify these energies, making Nature always beneficent. Omniscience is omniscience, the substance of omnific truth. It tells the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the sick and halt to take up their beds and walk. It depends upon no faith-demanding fabrications nor theories of an unknown god. It rests upon the foundation of reality, to bring ignorance away from its errors, calling us out of darkness into the glorious light of truth which makes us free. It places us in intelligent harmony with that which was and is and ever shall be, for body and soul alike, the resurrection and the life, redeeming our lives from destruction by saying, ‘Return from depravity, ye children of men.’ He that hath ears to hear let him hear. Amen.”

I wondered if the preacher knew who preached his sermon,—or if that strange man knew any more than he seemed to know about the boy beside him, or the other miracle. As the sermon closed he whispered something to the mother. It frightened her and she crossed herself. He repeated it. She caught the boy's face in her hands and turned it toward her. Then she uttered a faint cry, and with her arm about the boy she fell upon her knees, pressing her lips to her book and beads. Lacking the boy's instinct to turn her eyes or stretch her hand toward him who had done it, she was devoutly thanking God, as she had been taught. It was harmless, so far as she was concerned; but it was most unfortunate for the boy, who was not prepared for the rude awakening, and in a moment he hung on her arm as helpless as before.

Suddenly the woman ceased thanksgiving when the stranger shook her by the shoulder and repeated his question. She answered it, however, and he wrote the answer on his cuff, with a gold leadpencil.

While he was writing the choir began Luther's "Resurrection Hymn." Suddenly his face contracted with agony, as it had at the

concert, and apparently groping his way he left the Cathedral, while the grand arches echoed back the triumphant shout, "Hosanna in the highest! in the highest!"

CHAPTER V

WALKING home, I realized that not the least remarkable feature was the facility with which the distorted face was forgotten, and the way the natural face remained, with all its fascination. I could only remember the calm authority which said, "Peace, be still," to the troubled soul at the concert; "Rise up and walk," to the shrouded brain in the Cathedral; and "Lazarus, come forth!" to the sepulchred instincts, entombed in the pulpit. But reason as I would I only came back to the old question of the fishers of Capernaum: "What manner of man is this?"

It might have dropped there but that Fate,—or the glove-button,—had further plans for me; and, accordingly, after a brief respite, I fell again a victim to that haunting memory,—much as the two, and doubtless the preacher, fell back to their old estates when he left them,—and the longing for his help returned in a mad resolve to find him. It only stimulated the desire when, a day or two later, I read in

a newspaper that Richard Morton, M.D., with several clusters of letters following, after performing almost a miracle upon Lord Anandale's daughter, had sailed for his home, some thousand miles away. The paper announced the complete recovery of the patient, who had long been a helpless paralytic and had been recently pronounced hopelessly insane. It congratulated his excellency that his persistent importunity, backed by a fee amounting to a small fortune, had at last secured the celebrated physician's services. Parenthetically it remarked upon the Doctor's eccentric character, that had his patient been poor and he obliged to pay even his own traveling expenses, she would doubtless have received earlier attention.

Postponing my return trip,—which I was heartily dreading,—I booked by the first steamer following the Doctor. And the voyage itself, with an object, proved such a helpful distraction that, on arriving at a hotel at my destination, I was chiefly conscious of curiosity in asking the clerk if a Dr. Morton resided in the city.

The absurdity of the question threw him into a coughing fit,—he was more or less con-

sumptive anyway,—but he kept his watering eyes fixed upon my cranium. When he could speak he said:

“Turn to your left, sir, on going out. Take your third street to the left, and he is on your first left-hand corner. Fine stone house, high above the street,—can't miss it. High stone wall,—retaining wall. ‘Muckross’ cut in the arch above the gate; ‘Morton, M.D.’ on a small brass plate. Office entrance round the corner on the side street.”

Waving me on with his left hand, he went coughing down the hall. Then Colonel Warden, the proprietor, came up with professional courtesy, and began politely probing for the business that brought me there. Incidentally I remarked that I did not even know the name of a mortal within a thousand miles, except that I had once read something in a newspaper about a Dr. Morton, residing there.

Instantly his eyes fastened on the upper part of me, his left hand emerged from his pocket, and—but a look in my eyes checked him before he began about three lefts, and a high stone wall, with “Morton, M.D.” on a small brass plate, and an office entrance round the corner. He simply said:

"There's few who know less of us. Morton is one of the wonders of the world. You never met him? You ought to. Stop a bit. Perhaps I can bring it about."

He stepped to a telephone and I overheard: "No, indeed, Kate. No one is dying. Don't wake him up. I have a friend here,—a foreigner. I want him to meet the Doctor, and I'm taking him to the club to-night for that purpose. Ring me up, will you, if you find out later that he is not to be there? That's all."

I felt myself in luck till, on the way to the club, Colonel Warden remarked: "We may find him at pool, smashing cues and cursing like a pirate. Sometimes he plays like the Devil let loose, and again he can't hit his own ball. They will tell you it's whisky, and chloral, and morphia, and Heaven only knows what not; for his head is just high enough above the rest to make it a good mark for sour ones to shy at. But wait till you know him, and you'll not believe a word of it, even if he says it of himself,—which he very likely will."

Only then it dawned on me that I had based the whole assumption for my mad journey on

the random guess that a face that I had seen in the city and a name in the newspaper pertained to one and the same man. This Morton, M.D., was evidently a renowned cranium specialist, while the man I had watched was probably only an adept at some black art necromancy. Nevertheless, he was the man I was after, and a better disappointed being never climbed the broad stairs of that sumptuous clubhouse. To emphasize the point, a voice came through an open door above us, exclaiming:

“Jumping Moses! You’re a live wire, boy.”

And, nudging me, Colonel Warden whispered: “That’s Morton at a game. You go in and watch him through. It’s worth it. I’ll come in later and introduce you.”

I entered the billiard-room simply to escape further conversation; for there was no one on earth that I cared less to meet than this celebrated Morton. But all the occupants of the room were gathered about one table, watching one man, and through the crowd I caught a glimpse of the face from the Cathedral and the concert hall, bending over the pool table. His coat was off and his cuffs and tie. His

waistcoat was unbuttoned and so was his collar at the throat. His hair fell rakishly over his forehead and a cigarette dangled loosely between his lips. My heart sank, and I dropped on the nearest bench till I could gather myself together and go out. But a strange thing happened.

As I watched the man I began to realize the same indefinable charm in the boisterous hilarity as in the solemnity of the Cathedral and at the concert. He was still as unlike other men. In original compounds of superlative speech he berated a pocket for dodging to escape his ball; and later I saw him, after a ruinous shot, vent his chagrin in an exhibition of his herculean strength, twisting the offending cue as if it had been made of straw. But his "cursing" was almost classical, and it was worth the value of a cue to see him "smash" it. He drank, too; and as Colonel Warden had warned me, his friends were confoundedly ready to say, behind his back, that he drank beyond all reason. They knew, for they were always helping him—at all but providing the material. And they were mathematically and grammatically correct. But the most imaginative of them would hardly have ven-

tured to assert that they had ever seen him excited or bewildered by liquor.

At the end of the game he said: "That reminds me of a story," and while they crowded about him to listen he held out one hand, and then the other, for a waiter to button on his cuffs. Then, tossing his tie about his neck, he left them laughing and came across the room toward me, trying to button his collar for himself. Just before reaching me he turned to the waiter, who was following with his coat, and, lifting his chin, said: "Will you kindly damn this thing for me—or button it?"

Turning to me when his tie was adjusted, holding his hands behind him for his coat, he said: "The inordinate obstinacy of inanimate things has delayed my welcoming you to our club. Being on a pleasure trip, you may lack friends in this corner of creation, and if you'll allow me, I'll put your name on our club guest-book. It gives you the luxuries without the responsibilities. My name is Morton,—M.D."

"Mine is Willard," I said, taking his proffered hand under the impression that he must have seen me coming in with Colonel Warden.

Snapping his fingers for a waiter, he asked, "What shall we drink?"

Remembering what I had heard, I made one of those laborious efforts to avoid reproach to present company while expressing a personal habit of abstinence. He listened patiently, then put it in a nutshell, remarking:

"Teetotaler, but not prohibitionist, eh? I am precisely your opposite: a rank prohibitionist, but as far as possible from a teetotaler. To prevent the wrecks that liquor leaves stranded on the sands of time, I'd have its production prohibited. But I should want every existing drop stored in my wine cellar.

"Hello, Warden," he said, turning to my host, who was approaching directly behind him. "Didn't my housekeeper say you were bringing a—a—what offshoot of Adam was it, now, that she called him?—oh, a foreigner, to the club to-night? Trot him out in a hurry, old man; for I have an appointment with a patient for half an hour ago."

"It was Mr. Willard I brought, Doctor," the Colonel replied. "But it seems I've missed the introducing."

"Willard isn't a foreigner," the Doctor said, turning back to me. "And besides we are old

friends—or we shall be by this time to-morrow, for I want you to dine with me. Bachelors. All alone. I'll send my carriage for you at seven, sharp. Don't fail me, for I want you to see my dog."

Turning again to Colonel Warden, he said: "I must be off now, or my patient will die of the disease instead of from the doctor, which is against all medical ethics. Bring out a new one next time, Warden. Willard and I met twice while I was away. Once at a philharmonic concert, and again at high mass in the Cathedral."

CHAPTER VI

AND after all how much we resemble little paper boats, driven every way by puffs of lip-blown wind, over the deep blue sea in a wash-bowl. From the first it was evident enough that Dr. Morton possessed phenomenal hypnotic powers and clairvoyance, and such things were only natural adjuncts in the combination. When I thought that by mistake I had followed a great brain-doctor instead of a necromancer I was bitterly disappointed. But now these same qualities became most obnoxious. I fancied they were only surface phenomena, which for some reason he was fond of exploiting; but I began to wonder where the limit of that knowledge lay, and to dread the idea of being alone with him.

Chagrined by the apparent cowardice, I said to myself: "Suppose he can see things? What will it profit him, or injure me, if he reads every secret of my life?" Then a premonitory twinge warned me that there was one secret which I could not have him read,—that

a white rose without a thorn was enshrined upon an altar behind a closed door which no hand but hers should ever open. It was a sudden realization of the fact that I had utterly forsaken my original intent, and in the joy of being myself again it occurred to me as little as it did to the mother in the Cathedral to turn my eyes or stretch a hand toward him who had done it,—however unconsciously,—to us both. I felt as she did, like saying, "Thank God," and letting Morton go his way, and I was as much afraid of him as she was.

It might have personified retributive justice to have dropped me back again to need of him, but I understand now that the ulterior design of that glove-button only included my suffering as a means to an end; and the end was better accomplished in what actually happened. I had come on a fool's errand, but Morton was no less an interesting study, while I was better skilled in anthropological research than in handling love's mysteries. I was fair at metaphysics, too, and a good analyst of pretty much everything but love. So I resolved to remain a week or more, investigating the interesting freak until I understood him, through and through,—perfectly sure that by

no chicanery or mental mirrors could he ever see in me anything I chose to hide; then, strong and well again, I would go back to my laboratory, complete my work, and win the woman I worshiped. Admitting now the audacity of my presumption, I most humbly acknowledge it another score for the glove-button; but at the time I was thoroughly honest with myself, and the downfall of the Devil was not my conscious goal.

On the stroke of seven there stopped at the entrance to the hotel a grand pair of bays, a stately automaton of a coachman, and a highly polished brougham, with an interior as versatile as its owner; but I had hardly begun to note its appropriate eccentricities when it drew up at an arched entrance in a high stone wall. "Muckross" was cut in the stone arch. "Morton, M.D." was on a small brass plate, and under it was a notice that the office entrance was around the corner. A broad flight of steps, cut out of the solid rock, wound up to a magnificent lawn, high above the street, in the center of which stood a great stone mansion. Between life-size bronze figures I reached an inset veranda, where heavy carved oak doors were opened as I approached by

one whom instinct told me was Kate, the Doctor's housekeeper. She was merry and small, with crinkly black hair and Irish blue eyes: one upon whose right side it would obviously be well to keep if one hoped to prosper in any mission at Muckross.

"Mr. Willard?" she said, looking me through and through in a way that made me cringe, notwithstanding my courageous inclinations. "The Doctor was called to an accident and left word that the carriage should go for him at once if he had not returned when you arrived. Will you wait in the drawing-room, sir, or in the snuggerly? You can smoke in the snuggerly." She was taking my hat and stick.

"In the snuggerly," I said. The name was seductive; but so was a glimpse of the drawing-room through a tiled arch, between heavy portières. The snuggerly proved as different as a snuggerly should be, yet so like it that it could be nothing else than its vis-à-vis, across the broad tiled hall.

It was a large room, but so hung about with rare prints and paintings; so enveloped in oak-shelved books and robbed of its corners by marbles and bronzes; its tile floor so softened

with oriental rugs, and temptingly littered with armchairs and divans; so suggestive of harmony,—philo-harmony,—in an organ built into the wall opposite the arched entrance; so coaxingly encumbered with tables covered with books and magazines; so suggestively scented with the memory of burnt offerings in the pipe of peace; so hospitably erratic in the glow of bituminous blocks in a deep alcove of iron scrollwork at one end, and the brilliant vibrations of the setting sun flashing through a great circular stained glass window at the other end; so—everything that such a room could be or should be that, notwithstanding its enormous proportions, it was a perfect snugger.

Seating me with comfortable care, Kate placed a smoking-table beside me, remarking: "I am glad to hear that you do not drink, Mr. Willard, but I prepare what I call a temperance punch, with lime juice and biters, sugar, soda, and ice, which is rather refreshing and a good appetizer. I will fill a glass for you, if I may?"

With it, she left me to my thoughts, which were that I had made a good beginning, but that I should be slow to gather hope; for those

whose outer doors stand widest open are the more likely to keep the real treasures of the house in all-proof vaults. Then the stillness was broken by the rampant barking of a dog, mingled with the Doctor's voice, saying:

"In the snugger, is he? That's right. Now hurry along my lounging coat. What? Certainly I'll wear my lounging coat. Didn't I tell him it was strictly informal? O Dick! Suspend that address for a second. I have something to say myself. Listen. You go into the snugger and tell Mr. Willard the rest of it. Give him your warmest welcome to Muckross, and say I will be there the moment Kate produces my lounging coat,—and not before! Did you hear that, Kate? Go on into the snugger, Dick. The snugger! Go!"

After a second of silence the click of tiny claws sounded on the tiles and under the arch there came—I don't to this day feel sure that I know what, except that it was the Doctor's Dick. It was just a bit of keen intelligence, built like a dog. On the threshold it paused, with head on one side, and one forefoot in the air; a snow-white atom, with seal-brown eyes; a perfect little gentleman. But the ears were

suggestively tilted, and the eyes rested thoughtfully on—possibly it was imagination—on my cranium. And I believe, too, that the nose swerved a bit, as if to indicate that the office entrance was round the corner. After due deliberation his ears fell and he came gracefully waltzing across the snugery, wagging his—

O Dick, forgive me. I know very well that you haven't any tail. And confusion take whoever doubts your claim to having been born without one, just like other gentlemen. I was only referring to your way of expressing entire satisfaction by a vibratory motion of the osseous articulations at the extremity of your spinal vertebræ, when your delicate haunches catch the oscillations and apparently wag. There, Dick. Is that satisfactory?

Then, last of the trio, came the Doctor, in his lounging coat, with the announcement that dinner was served—and I was thankful, after all, that there was a table between us. Subjects of conversation sprang up with erratic diversity. On many of them I lacked a single lucid sentiment, but with all he seemed as familiar as with the streets of his own city.

He impressed me as being a vitalized encyclopedia, compared with which I seemed to myself a first year primer, so that was the more confusing when, lighting a cigarette, he said:

“I’m not good at keeping sentiments to myself, Willard. I feel like a miner who has just struck a grand pocket, and I want to acknowledge it. It’s a great thing for an oxidized cigarette-holder like me to come in contact with a man like you, who knows something, and is not too badly conceited about it to let others learn.” And the most astonishing part of it was that he really thought and meant precisely what he said.

“I am simply a good listener, Doctor,” I replied. “But that is really the best educator an intelligent brain can find. For an effort to tell what one knows that he knows always discloses volumes of latent information.”

“Sophistry and sense are coördinate, but they are alternative,” he replied. “The sophistry is yours. The facts and the floor are mine. No one knows everything; but the properly rounded man knows something about everything, and everything about something. Failing to be like you,—a sphere,—I would, if I could, be a true combination of right an-

gles,—a square,—neither narrowed by bigotry nor elongated by visionary theories. I would know all about one thing,—my profession. But knowledge is power. I should be dangerous to the world if I knew too much, for I realize its omnipotence. I believe that you do not,—though you taught me to realize it.”

“I did what?” I asked.

“Taught me to realize the omnipotence of knowledge.”

“I do not understand you. What have I said?”

“Nothing, here.”

“Where, then? What do you refer to?”

“To the Cathedral, on Easter Sunday.”

“And to *me*?”

“I say, Willard, when we are better acquainted we can talk more understandingly. For the present let me go on telling you of my ambition. When I was a boy I read that chapter on drugs which Collins makes ‘The Man Frosco’ write, and it set my soul on fire. It kept on burning till I held all my diplomas and degrees. Then I stopped and asked myself what it all amounted to. Only to a discovery of the weakness of the science; of

the props which supported it; of the errors misguiding it; of the glare of chicanery giving it a false glamour. The cresset burned farther beyond me than ever—and it is still far away.” Lighting a fresh cigarette he added: “Confession is good for the soul but it is bad for the reputation. Let’s try a tramp about the billiard table for an hour. What do you say to a game of billiards, Dick?”

Sitting on the Doctor’s knee, Dick tossed his head, with a dainty sneeze which I soon learned expressed his entire approbation. “Then get about it, boy,” the Doctor added. “The billiard-room. Go on. Show Mr. Willard how you will some day climb the golden stairs to that happy hunting-ground where good little dogs have silver tails. Go on!”

As we climbed, the light glistening on the snowy atom, his feet went up one at a time, with dignified deliberation, like a man,—not like any dog I ever saw on stairs. The Doctor followed in a leisurely way, emphasizing a slight limp, due to an injured ankle. Then I noticed that the little fellow in advance was perceptibly limping, on his left hindfoot. I stopped, convulsed. The Doctor paused to

look back at me. Dick paused to look back at the Doctor.

"That bally little beggar actually believes that he is Morton, and that I'm his dog," he said. "And there are times when I am tempted to believe he would make the better doctor, whether or no I made the better dog."

Dick gave an approving sneeze. "You conceited thing! Go on upstairs!" the Doctor exclaimed. And as we climbed again he added: "That boy has audacity enough even for the pulpit. But he can't talk yet, and talk is about all there is to-day to the glorious science of medicine. That is where these undigested methods of healing hold the whip-handle. For bread pills and pure water are undoubtedly the best medicine, nine times out of ten, if the patient does not know it and if he has unbounded faith in his physician."

We had hardly reached the billiard-room when a bell rang, with a peculiar, penetrating quality, demanding attention. It was the office bell, and as Kate's step sounded below the Doctor leaned over the banisters and spoke, while Dick, behind him, barked.

"Kate," he said, "lying lips are an abomination unto the Lord, but a very present help in

time of trouble. Whoever it is, say that I am dead. And if they cannot wait till morning, send them to—ah—send them to Chandler.”

Picking up a cue, he said: “Dr. Chandler makes slow work pulling in a practice. He spends his spare time berating me. It’s an acknowledged adjunct of the profession here, but Chandler has good stuff in him, if he could only keep his mind occupied; so I try to keep it going.”

There was a call through a tube, and the Doctor replied: “Confusion take you, Kate! When I am dead why do you try to resurrect me? An old woman hurt herself falling downstairs? That’s natural. Of course it hurts. What? No money, and Chandler won’t go without pay? How do you know? All right. Tell the boy I’ll be there as soon as he is. Have Sam put Betty in the cart. Put in my accident case and have an extra top-coat for Mr. Willard. He’s going with me. I hear the telephone. Whoever it is say I’ll stop on the way back. Look sharp. I’m in a hurry.”

After lighting a cigarette and making a fancy shot he turned to me as if a new idea had occurred to him. “I must go to the other

end of nowhere," he said, "to patch up an old woman who didn't quite spoil herself falling downstairs. Will you come along? or would you rather harmonize yourself with something here till I return."

Of course I went with him.

CHAPTER VII

IT was black and blustering, but it was Saturday; and there never was a Saturday night, however black and blustering, when those streets were not crowded, from wall to wall, with people, perambulators, and dogs. Betty was high-spirited and the Doctor in a reckless mood. We tore through those streets like—if Colonel Warden would only say it for me—like the very Devil let loose. But Dick was with us, saving us and Heaven only knows how many more. Balanced on my knee, looking steadily into the blackness, he sent forth an unbroken volley of sharp, shrill barks. Every one knew them as well as they knew the Doctor; for all day, every day, they emanated from the open window of the Doctor's brougham. It was better for clearing a path than a fire-engine bell.

“Confound those careless creatures!” the Doctor said, as we drew up in a narrow street. “This is the third time since daylight this

morning that I've been dragged into' these beastly slums. Come on in, if you like. Betty will stand till the crack of doom."

As I followed him into a miserable place I recalled the trouble Lord Annandale had had in securing his services. An old woman lay groaning on a cot. Her daughter sat sobbing beside her. Her grandson, hat in hand, stood in one corner, still panting from his run for the Doctor. Soiled dishes from a meager supper stood on a bare table by the window, on which a single candle burned, lighting the room.

Doctor Morton took the patient's right hand in his left, and passed his right hand over her forehead. The groaning ceased. His hand moved slowly to her shoulder and down her side. He had not asked a question when, with a slight nerve shiver, he took the gold pencil from his pocket and wrote on two prescription blanks. Tearing them from the pad he handed them to the boy, with a sovereign, saying:

"Go to the nearest chemist, lad, and have these two put up. To-morrow your mother will buy you some new shoes and things with the change. Be careful, but be quick."

When the boy was gone he turned the patient on her back and, leaning over her, gave one arm a rather savage wrench. The daughter groaned. Looking over his shoulder Dr. Morton said, sharply: "What the deuce is the matter with you? Did I hurt you?"

"No, Doctor. It's mother," she sobbed.

"Do you think the racket you are making will help her any?"

"No, Doctor."

"Then keep still," he said. And a moment later, buttoning up his coat, he added: "Your mother put her shoulder out. I had to set it. But it could not have hurt her much, for together we didn't wake her up. Now she will sleep on, if you behave yourself, till I come in the morning. Your son will bring a plaster and a bottle. Put the plaster on her side there where it is red. Wet a towel from the bottle, and wrap it well around her shoulder. Then go to bed and sleep. Wet the towel each time you wake up. That is all your mother will require till I come in the morning. She will be much better then. By the way, where do you sleep?"

"With mother, Doctor."

"Where does the boy sleep?"

"Across the foot of the bed, Doctor."

"Well, never let him do it again after to-night. I'll send round a cot bed for him in the morning."

She caught his hand and kissed it, which was more to him, I fancy, than double Lord Annandale's fee; but his only comment as we drove away was, "What fool things people are!"

He handed me the reins at the massive entrance to one of the grand mansions of the city, saying: "If you don't mind waiting, I'll be back in a second. It's only a nervous woman who wants her husband to pay me five guineas for a night call. If there'd been a ball at Government House to-night, she would have gone there, and I should have gone without my guineas. So much is the glorious science of medicine like Imperial Cæsar, turned to clay, stopping up holes to keep the wind away."

On the way home he said, "If it's not too late, I'd like to show you my professional rooms—and I have a favor to ask of you before you go."

We stopped at the side entrance. It was like the front,—an arch in the high wall,—

but instead of an openwork iron gate it was closed with solid doors. The Doctor pressed a button and a servant took the horse, while we entered,—literally entered,—the heart of a great rock forming the entire corner. Instead of climbing to the lawn we stood in a broad corridor, with consulting rooms and operating rooms on each side, lighted by electricity and ventilated to an even temperature through a unique system of blasts and suction. At the farther end the hall was cut at right angles by another hall, leading to an engine-room, with dynamo, on the left, and to an electric laboratory on the right. Between the two were the stairs to the house; above and behind the stairs was the hidden entrance to the Den. Everything was excavated out of the solid rock and the floors and walls were polished like porphyry.

The laboratory was full of intricate and complicated instruments, the conception of the Doctor's brain, and many of them the work of his own fingers. He explained them like a child prattling of a pet toy,—so clearly and simply that while I listened I seemed to comprehend them all. But if I turned back, to test myself, I found that I had not really

grasped even the crudest incidents. Only then I began to apprehend what I had undertaken when I determined to know this man. The world knew him as it knew the bark of his dog, the small brass plate, the entertaining eccentricities at the club, his wonderful ability to heal. I wondered if the world or I had it in us to know the rest. For the conviction impressed me that all this was but superficial phenomena which he exploited to distract; that behind it all was a man he was endeavoring to obliterate.

While I was thinking these thoughts he turned on me abruptly, with a singular frown on his forehead, watching me through half-closed eyes. I wondered if he purposed practicing some chicanery on me, and I consciously sealed myself against him. But I was mistaken. As I knew him better I recognized only resentful submission in that rather characteristic expression. He shrugged his shoulders and led me to the door of the Den. Then he directed a young man in the engine-room to prepare two cups of coffee; and taking a gold key, tipped with silver-steel, hanging on his watch-chain, he unlocked the door.

A small, dome-shaped room, excavated en-

tirely through the one entrance, was flooded with delicately tinted electric light. There was a desk on one side, two or three chairs, a divan, and in the center an ebony table, beautifully inlaid with onyx. On the table, stark alone, was the only ornament in the room. It was a miniature of one of the bronze doors of the Baptistery of San Giovanni, in Florence, standing nine or ten inches high, comprising the arch and the wonderful gates, perfect, to the tiny bas-reliefs, all wrought in pure gold. From the moment when the door opened my thoughts were never wholly away from it. In some way it seemed to me the very soul of Muckross; but a strong disinclination restrained me from referring to it.

CHAPTER VIII

WHEN the coffee was brought, remembering that since I came Dr. Morton had not tasted so much as a drop of wine, even at dinner, I said that I hoped he was not abstaining out of courtesy to me.

Instantly he replied: "I am not the kind to sacrifice myself without it's conducing to another's comfort, nor are you one to find satisfaction in depriving another to pamper personal notions. Drinking is largely a matter of unconscious hypnotism, anyway. If you were a drinker we might have consumed a lot by this; but we should still be as dry as parched camels."

"With the power as well developed as it is in you," I said, "you might influence others; but I can hardly imagine you yourself being influenced."

Instantly I regretted the words, for he turned on me with such a strange expression on his face, his eyes half closed. But he asked, quietly:

"What powers do you refer to, pray?"

"Don't take me too technically, Doctor," I replied. "I am utterly ignorant of the mysterious—ah—ah—sciences. Humanly speaking, I should say the 'power' to perform miracles."

He sighed and shrugged his shoulders. Then he threw his feet over a rest, leaned back in his chair, and speaking slowly, said: "You used that word 'sciences' out of courtesy, lest I be an adept of some kind, and sensitive. I am not an adept of any kind, and I am not sensitive. There is no science of the mysterious. Science obliterates mystery. Efforts are often made to promulgate theories of the unknown and call them science; and a theory well put is like a lie well told, as strong as an axiom and infinitely more pliable. It takes a strong hold on the ordinary mind for the very reason that it is carefully prepared for that express purpose. Christianity is the world's grandest instance of a theory without a single substantiating fact. It is the champion among endless efforts to take up obvious effects, proclaim apparently justifying causes, then subtly drift beyond the known, and

proclaim the result as sublime, indisputable truth."

More anxious to learn his opinion of his own powers than to discuss theology, I asked, "Do you mean, Doctor, that mesmerism, clairvoyance, astral projection, and all those things are humbug?"

"Far from it!" he exclaimed. "They are the obvious effects—the indisputable conditions which confront us. It is the promulgating of sciences to account for them,—sciences without a scientific fact,—which leads the world astray and hinders the development of real knowledge. Truth lies at the foundation of every fabrication. Physical projection and materialization are real—accidents, usually following certain incidents—but the sciences of Theosophy and Spiritualism, claiming to account for the manifestations, are only guesswork.

"There's a lot of actual healing which is so marvelous and mysterious that it easily gains converts to any kind of religion exploiting it; but I fancy that electricity—at least some relative of uranium—will eventually prove responsible for the most of the mental mysteries.

They are all the result of suggestion. Life is all suggestion—and mostly imagination, for that matter. Imagination works on suggestion, and it has done more good and more harm—more killing and curing—than all the drugs in the world ever accomplished. It is only the old story—old when the Bible was new—‘As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.’ Christian Science and the like are a blessing, in a way, expanding the theory of homeopathy (that like cures like) by instigating Imagination to counteract the mischief being done by Imagination.”

“But you astonish me, Doctor, when you include astral projection and materialization among things with truth in them,” I said.

“I believe projection is not only true but easily in the power of any one,—if he only knew how,” the Doctor replied. “Can you wag your ear? I can wag mine. See? You could if you knew how; but for the life of me I could not tell you how any more than you could tell me how you open your mouth or move your hand. I did it once by accident. Then I knew how. Nothing more.”

“I have heard some apparently authentic

stories about the dying projecting themselves to friends far away," I said.

"If it is as I think, through some integrant of electricity," he replied, "the dying more easily use it simply because reason is relaxing its power over instinct. Your reason would pronounce the thing preposterous, so you couldn't do it if you tried. But I think I can give you a demonstration. Kate was abed and asleep long ago, two floors above us, in the rear. She has a frame of bells and tubes connecting her with pretty much everything. She reaches the Den by that tube. See if I cannot call her to it."

As he spoke he was lifting the cup of coffee to his lips. It paused, in mid air. The other hand was about to remove his cigarette. It went to his forehead instead. He closed his eyes with his fingers. He had just hung his glasses on his ear, to show me how vigorously he could wag it. They still hung there. He puffed two or three thick clouds of smoke. There was nothing uncanny but a sleepy voice coming through the tube, saying:

"What is it, Doctor?"

"Ask her how she knew," the Doctor whispered.

"It's just a trick of the Doctor's," Kate replied to my question. "I'm a nervous thing, and have so much jumping for bells from others that when he wants me he has a way of making me think that I see him—like just now he was standing by my bed saying, 'Go to the Den tube, Kate.' At first the remedy was worse than the disease, it scared me so; but I've got that used to it that I wish he'd teach all his callers and patients the trick, and do away with bells altogether."

"Before you go to sleep again and forget, Kate, can you tell me anything about how he looked to-night?" I asked.

"I'm most afraid not, sir," she replied. "I was that sound asleep and he seemed in an awful hurry. I just jumped. He had a cup of some kind—not a wine glass—in one hand, I think; and there was something funny dangling on his ear. No. That is absurd. I must have been dreaming and mixed things."

"Thank you, and good-night, Kate," I called and dropped the tube.

The Doctor turned slowly till he faced me, smiling as he said, "Don't let it convert you to anything. I only know how it is done. I fancy the secret of many things lies in the fact

that electricity is a combination of energies—one of them a vehicle of thought, carrying pictures, impressions. I believe that, like air, electricity is a combination. If we can separate the parts as we do air, using only the quality which we require, what can we not accomplish for humanity?"

"You are beyond my depth," I said. "But I have grasped something of this incident with Kate. Help me by making it clearer."

"How can I?" he said. "It is no clearer to me. Kate calls it a trick. As yet that's not a bad name for it. She certainly *saw* me. The cup, instead of a wine-glass, and the glasses on my ear are good evidence. But she saw me standing, while I was really sitting. Now, I thought of myself as standing by her bed, delivering just the message she received; and to make a good exhibition I wanted her to hurry. The cup in my hand and the glasses on my ear were sufficiently distracting to demand a little of my thought and so became part of it, and some reliable vehicle carried that thought and impressed it on her brain. I have never received back any more impression than if I had sent the message in writing; but that is a matter for development.

Only this is certain: there is something about us bigger than our brains. Soul is a bad name, for it confuses us with the rutted meaning of Christianity. 'Mind' has a preconceived meaning, too, but call it 'Mind.' It surely works in our own brains, receiving what information we put there and directing our actions accordingly; but as surely it will go from us and work upon other brains, producing impressions there, for other Minds to utilize in directing actions, if consciously—or unconsciously—we send it upon the mission. I added that word unconsciously, Willard, in deference to certain doubts in me concerning you."

"Concerning me?" I exclaimed.

But the Doctor only smiled, and continued: "As we know each other better that question will surely come up again. This much at least is true: I can do and be only according to my brain. My Mind, no matter how mighty, is restricted to whatever my brain is. If people would only grasp that fact it would be immensely helpful to humanity. My Mind manipulates me through my brain; and through my brain it receives all the information by which it manipulates me. The ship's

sextant, compass, chart, etc., establish all the information upon which the navigator must act, and the engine and helm are his only means of expression. An error in any of them limits the possibilities of the greatest officer who ever stood upon a bridge. If his source of reception or expression is wrong, the results will always be wrong. It is my *brain*, not my Mind, nor my soul, which is responsible for what I am. Give the Mind a perfect workshop and you make a perfect man. If we can operate on the brain and eradicate its errors, we can obliterate evil from the world."

"But suppose the devil declines to be downed so easily," I said. "I presume he is capable of devising new methods of instigating to evil."

"My conventional friend," he replied, "the theory of 'the devil and his devices' has muddled religions ever since the first investigator realized a war on his members. To clear the god he had created,—as the creator of everything,—from the crime of having created crime, he devised 'the devil' to bear the responsibility, as if the devil, and all that in him is, must not have been a part of the great first cause as much as everything else."

"I'm not vouching for a devil, Doctor," I said. "But that evil *is*, is painfully evident."

"As evident as the cold which nips our ears on frosty mornings," he replied. "But a god could not create cold. Man cannot manufacture cold. Cold is nothing. It simply indicates an absence of heat. We can make heat, and in exact proportion as we produce it cold disappears. Evil is nothing,—absolutely nothing,—but a lack of good. Just as instilling heat obliterates cold, instigating good obliterates evil."

"Can insanity be treated as well, Doctor?" I asked.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Abnormal conditions relegated to retreats are not half as difficult problems as are diseased and distorted brains outside," he said. "When we have disintegrated electricity we shall hold the key that can lock and unlock doors in any brain. The ability to check pain is immaterial compared with that; and besides, pain ought not always to be checked. For pain is Nature's danger signal. Mental or physical it means that some law has been broken, and it is better that we should be noti-

fied; for a broken law demands either vengeance or repair. What I want to do is to reach the operating room of the Mind.

“It is as sensible to condemn a man to prison for limping when he has a broken leg as to condemn his soul—or Mind—for evil results through the medium of a distorted brain.” A moment later he added:

“That boy in the Cathedral had so small a brain cavity that his Mind could not work at all in the outer cells of thought. He was an absolutely irresponsible idiot. His mother gave him to me, and I brought her on here with him, to be his nurse in our hospital. Now she wants to take back her gift, because, as the result of an operation which gave his Mind room to work, he is hearing, seeing, and learning to talk. He is beginning to be what they call ‘morally responsible’; but surely he has the same Mind as before. We operated only on his brain. It is the brain which can be and must be adjusted. Then all tendencies to—”

Being a good listener my eyes were intently on the earnest face across the table. But throughout the conversation my hand had been

gently caressing the golden gem at my elbow. I suppose that my finger touched something which yielded, inciting harder pressure. It proved a spring which released the gates under the arch, and they swung open. I did not realize what had happened when the sentence died on the Doctor's lips, and with a groan and a cringe the face was transformed to the one which I saw at the concert.

My heart stood still. My eyes followed his and through the gates I saw something angelic on ivory,—a girlish face, enveloped in gold-brown hair. Then the fragrance of a white rose engulfed me. My brain reeled in the old agony. I saw nothing, felt nothing, but the reality of the Woman I worshiped; and I could have fallen at Morton's feet for help. But his groaning, across the table, recalled me. I dared not look in his face again nor ask a question; but realizing that in some way I had done it, I set myself desperately to repair the damage. My hand was numb as I watched it close the gates. Then forcing myself to speak, I said:

“I must accidentally have touched a spring in this masterly work of a Florentine gold-beater. I have often sat on Angelo's bench,

in the Palazzo Duomo, admiring these grand gates of Giovanni's Baptistry."

Then, with the feeling that our only extrication from the predicament into which I had plunged us lay in my continuing any kind of talk requiring no response, and also that I must get myself away,—that he would better be alone,—I drew my hand slowly away from the golden horror, following it with my eyes while I spoke of the slant-eyed workmen of Cathay, who inlaid the onyx in the ebony. Then from the table to the rug, with a personal experience among the weavers in Damascus. Then to the polished floor, recalling the excavations of Elephanta, near Bombay, and up the Nile. And, still talking, I rose slowly, taking my hat, and walked down the hall with Dr. Morton.

I was only startled into silence when I opened the outer door to find myself in a flood of sunshine when I thought it was the middle of the night.

Cordially grasping my hand, the Doctor,—who was wholly himself again,—said: "It is a good omen that our first evening has gone quickly. Remember it in considering the favor I have to ask, which is that you bring your

traps and make Muckross your home as long as you can remain in the city. Good-by, my friend. A sound morning sleep to you and a good appetite."

CHAPTER IX

REACHING my room I lay down, alternately determining to leave the city at once and to accept the invitation. A dream settled the question. I was facing Dr. Morton in the snuggery, clutching his wrists. He struggled and writhed, glaring at me with those blood-shot eyes set in the horribly distorted face. Everything was in confusion. Chairs and tables were overturned. I woke, dripping with perspiration, just as I was leaning toward him, looking straight into his eyes, saying: "Sleep, man! Sleep! I command you, Sleep!"

It was easily accounted for and while dressing I got myself sufficiently from the oppression to laugh at the strand of hypnotism woven in. But the lasting impression was of his colossal qualities, mental and physical, compared to which I was little better than a pigmy. He held me much too high, but familiarity would breed contempt if I gave it the oppor-

tunity. Possibly, too, there was something in the shrine which frightened me.

Coming from the lunch room I found Kate waiting in the hotel parlor. She declined the chair I offered, and began, hurriedly: "Excuse me for coming here, Mr. Willard; but the Doctor will call to take you to drive, and I wanted to see you first. He will ask you to come to Muckross to live. I was afraid you might think it too—something or other—and decline; and I wanted to say how much he really wants you, and how hard I will try to make you comfortable, if you will only come."

It was no small compliment; but I referred to our slight acquaintance, and to the pity of it if he should repent.

"But he will not!" she said, quickly. "He knows men. His dining-room and billiard-room are always full, and his decanters and cigar boxes are always empty, fill them as often as I will. He lets those people come because amusing them helps him to forget to think. But he never asked one of them to stay the night. And never, until last night, has he ever taken a mortal into the Den. You will save him, Mr. Willard, if you will only

come. He is always saving others, but he is dying an awful death, alone. He needs you."

She stopped suddenly, as she caught the look of astonishment in my face. Her cheeks, which were flushed, turned pale. "I never spoke of it to any one before," she said. "And I will never speak again. I forgot that I was only his housekeeper. I only remembered that if you would come you could understand him, and save him."

"I think that you are wrong, Kate," I said. "But I will come."

She gave me a grateful glance and hurried away.

Of course Dr. Morton stood alone. No one could reach the heights he had attained without being alone. Mountain peaks are always in solitude. That I could ever climb the heights was beyond hoping. I consented simply for Kate's sake; for her devotion was a quality too rare to be lightly ignored.

During the afternoon in the brougham the Doctor's conversation ran along different lines, but as all roads lead to Rome, everything turned, with him, to his grand passion to obliterate evil and resulting suffering from the

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world. Pointing to a cottage we were passing, he said:

“The people living there are in court. The rector of the parish instigated the action. The crime with which they are charged is that they allowed a baby, two years old, to go from influenza to inflammation of the lungs; then to the brain coating, and then, of course, it died of brain fever. They trusted to prayer, instead of calling a physician. The rector’s Bible justifies them; Christian Science stands behind it; and any doctor in the world will admit that if there is a thing a god ought to be able to accomplish in response to supplication, it is the restoration of a healthy child down with influenza. I’ve done it myself time and again, and they’re recovering every day without either prayer or pills. It would not have required a fraction of the disruption of things to have cured him that it would to send rain where Nature’s forces are prepared for drought. And worse yet, those people had just lost one child. An unpaid doctor’s bill was all that remained of him. In that case the rector extended to them the consolation of religion, telling them that all things must eventuate just as God willed, regardless of

everything, and that they must be reconciled. So this time, on their knees they prayed, 'Lead us not into another affliction, but deliver us from any more doctor's bills.' Now, instead of religious consolation, the rector starts an action for criminal neglect."

"It is certainly confusing," I remarked.

"It is," he said. "Simply because people have eyes, but they see not. Ears have they, but they hear not. They have hands, but they only handle over and over the same old idiotic contradictions, till it's no wonder their brains become twisted, denying eternal truth to justify their elastic souls in kneeling at the altar of popular ethics. I myself have very little faith in drugs. A doctor does not cure. He often relieves and ought always to console,—which is all the aid that Nature requires, outside of surgery, to work out salvation where salvation is possible. All England prayed for the restoration of our Prince when he was down with typhoid, and he recovered,—as thousands of others have from precisely the same conditions. But when for weeks all America prayed for the recovery of President Garfield he died, because, as the autopsy revealed, he had received what was then consid-

ered a mortal wound. No one wondered at his death, for all acknowledged—little though they applied the fact—that it did not lie in the power of deity to save the life of one mortally wounded. Yet more suggestive is the fact that Garfield's case has recently been taken up again, in the light of modern progress, and a distinguished American has read a paper before a large medical congress proving, from the successful treatment of precisely the same conditions, that if as much had been known then as is known to-day President Garfield's life might easily have been saved. But the eyes see not, and the ears hear not, and we go right on praying for rain and punishing people for trusting to prayer to heal the sick.

“Why, the intelligent administration of law is absurdity. Law is no more creatable than cold. It is simply a relation; always relative; always dependent,—the immutable connection between cause and effect. Intelligence is simply a knowledge of the relations. Intelligent administration of law would be as impossible as it would be to create something a foot long with only one end to it. Law is not amenable to a creator.”

"Then how about the past age of miracles, Doctor?" I asked.

"The age of miracles is not passed, for the age of miracles never was," he replied. "Some of the recorded miracles are absurd. It is silly to believe that a god who had created all men and loved all men would, even if he could, disrupt the universe, and hold the sun and moon still in the heavens so that some of his creatures could have more light to go on killing others whom he had created. And as for wonderful things which really occurred, and are occurring as much to-day as ever in history, it is much more likely that there is an error in our understanding of law than that law was ever transcended. It couldn't be, or it wouldn't be law."

"But there must be punishment for crime," I said.

"It depends upon how you consider crime and what you mean by punishment," he replied. "No man ever committed an offense except with the conviction that it was the best course for himself, under the circumstances. His Mind was working on false information which it received through a disordered brain. A deaf man does not hear a warning. A blind

man does not see his danger. But punishing their souls for their blunders would be absurd."

"Do you mean that criminals, too, can be reformed by treatment of the brain?" I asked.

"What else can reformation mean?" he said. "Only what is *de*-formed needs *re*-formation. The body of the convict is not deformed. The brain was certainly responsible for the offense, and punishing the body, in prison, does not *re*-form the brain. The brain is all that is wrong with the fool, the idiot, the maniac, the criminal. With disintegrated electricity and power to use its parts we shall be able to make them all rational and honest. When Macbeth wails,

'Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;
Raze out the troubles of the brain?'

we shall answer with the word his wife has taught us. We shall locate the disordered cells which lead the Mind astray, and say to them, 'Out, damned spot!' and the evil will disappear. You are right, Willard. It can be done and we will try to do it."

"I!" I exclaimed. The Doctor only shrugged his shoulders and smiled.

Returning to Muckross for dinner, he insisted on sending at once to the hotel for my luggage and without more formality I was installed in surroundings where every hour throbbed with life, but where the time slipped away without a hint as to Kate's meaning of any help that I could render. And true to her word she never mentioned it again.

I knew Dr. Morton no better as time went by than after the first night in the Den; and though the fascination grew and held me there week after week, I only became better impressed that I never should know him. Every day the friendship between us strengthened, and new depths constantly developed in the man, but I could not fathom one of them. I had not found a limitation which I could understand when an incident occurred,—or was it an accident?

CHAPTER X

I OFTEN enjoyed the organ in the snug-gery opposite the arched entrance; for the Doctor was fond of music, though he said he never played. One afternoon I sat alone, dreaming at the organ. These dreams were always of the Woman I worshiped. She grew constantly dearer to me, though I was calmly letting the time slip by instead of turning every energy to win the prize. I could not understand myself or what held me to Muckross. In dreams, which grew almost to conviction, I fancied there was to be some grand sacrifice, or some great service which I should render her, till sometimes I could almost hear her whisper, "You did it for me, because you loved me so; and, beloved, I can love you now."

Suddenly in the polished brass plate of the organ I saw Dr. Morton standing in the arch behind me, one hand holding back the portière. I played on, without speaking, my eyes fixed on the reflection in the mirror. My

thoughts, with my fingers following, wandered back along the beautiful days we had spent together till they brought me to the concert where I first saw that strong, kind face coming toward me. Instinctively my fingers leaped to the grand refrain of "The Holy City,"—"Hosanna in the highest!"

The face I was watching shrank into the awful lines that I had not seen there since my first night in the Den, and Dr. Morton disappeared.

Stunned, I sat there, unconsciously going over and over the same refrain till Kate ran in from the rear door, caught my arm, and whispered: "For God's sake, not that, Mr. Willard. He might come in and hear it."

The Doctor did not appear again till we met at the dinner table. There were dark lines under his eyes and a leaden pallor about his lips. He sat silent at the table and left it soon, to lie down on the divan, where he was instantly sound asleep.

Kate's face was pale, and even little Dick, instead of jumping up as usual for a nap beside his master, lay on the rug till I pushed back my chair; then, for the first time, and without an invitation, he jumped on my knee

and lay there shivering, his brown eyes wide open, watching his unconscious master.

Passing me, Kate whispered, "He must have heard."

In disgust I said to myself: "He heard a strain of music. And now, stupefied by an opiate, he's lying there snoring like a brute! Oh, Morton! Morton!" My meteor flashed and in the flame expired, without leaving in me one spark of charity even, to relieve the blackness.

Kate beckoned. I followed her into the snuggerly. Dick came too, but his pretty head was drooping. I pitied him. Kate's eyes were heavy with crushed tears. I pitied her. She whispered:

"Now you have seen it, Mr. Willard. Now you can pity him and help him."

Pity *him*? I had not thought of that. Kate whispered the words, but they thundered through me. Had I reveled in his friendship only to say what I had said to myself the moment his mute suffering appealed to me for pity and for help? How little I understood even the unconscious thing upon the divan.

"What is it, Kate?" I asked; and she, sobbing, said:

"Some awful thing that he remembers. That your playing makes him remember."

"I will go to my room and think, Kate," I said. "If he wakes and wants me, or if you want me, you will find me there."

So I sat alone with the problem; for I must find the solution first, if I would help him. It was the Hosanna strain, almost identical in "The Holy City" and the "Resurrection Hymn," which made him remember something about the one whose face was on the ivory behind the golden gates,—something sufficient to torture him into going to any limit to force forgetfulness.

The gates had not been opened nor had any reference been made to the gem since my first night in the Den.

Often, however, as I had sat beside it the bewildering fragrance of the astral rose filled the air till sometimes I wondered if the brilliant grace of girlhood in the shrine, sanctified by suffering, had developed into the woman I worshiped. What could it be, then, that Morton remembered? What did she mean when she said, "I cannot love"? My fists were clenched. My collar choked me. For whoever it was in the shrine, Morton had

loved her and lost her in no ordinary way. If it could ever have been possible for him to wrong a woman, and if she had taken her own life in shame, I could see how remorse might torture such a man as he.

He said once: "Pain is Nature's danger signal. Mental or physical, it means that a law has been broken,—and broken law demands either vengeance or repair." The keenness of his suffering indicated the proportion of the broken law. That it continued showed that it was not repaired,—that he thought it irreparable. If it meant anything it meant that he was directly responsible for the irredeemable wreck of the woman whom he loved. Nothing less could account for it, and there was but one thing worse—I could not even think that other thing in connection with Morton.

But why did the fragrance of the white rose haunt me? Why did I cringe to realize that he loved her still, with all the fierceness of his tortured soul? Because I knew that if it transpired that the two were one, I should kill him! and laugh as I watched him die: the final vengeance of the broken law which had forced her to say to me, "I cannot love." It

even came to me that this was the act of which I dreamed; that it was for this that the destiny which shapes our ends had brought me half way round the world. I understood it all at last, and why the button quit my glove. The veins seemed bursting in my throat when suddenly, in the middle of the night, there stole to my ears the first soft notes of the "Resurrection Hymn" from the organ in the snuggerly. Noiselessly I hurried down the stairs. The doors under the arch were closed. The rear door stood ajar. I looked in. I saw him sitting there. *My friend.*

Dear Heaven, how quickly we can forget! Again I only realized that I loved him, and what I ought to be and must be if I would be worthy to do so. The only light in the room was one of the organ candles, shining full upon the side of his face which was toward me. Stark alone it stood out in the darkness, every feature radiant with supernal joy. He had no notes. He did not glance at the keyboard, but his fingers moved with a touch and precision that were perfect. His hair was thrown back from his forehead. His eyes looked upward, and a tear flashed like a diamond as it crept down his cheek.

Then, in a voice which was full of pathetic melody, he sang as he played:

“Hosanna in the highest! In the highest!”

Stunned, I stood there. The alternative was gone. The other awful thing was true. He must have murdered the woman whom he loved. But the face at the organ was looking *forward*, beyond the foreline of Eternity, in faith believing that for some mitigating expiation, which he knew, it would there be set right,—the broken law which here was irreparable.

His eyes fell till they rested on a plain gold ring he always wore. He clutched it with the other hand, cringed, and left the organ.

The moment he reached his room I hurried after him and tapped on the door. He was in bed. “What, up and dressed at this time of night?” he asked.

It took me by surprise, and I replied, rashly: “I fancied I heard the organ. I was not feeling quite right and possibly my brain was feverishly romancing. Seeing a light under your door, I came across.”

Watching me with half-closed eyes and speaking slowly, he said: “Your mind requires cold facts for a foundation, Willard,

however it may romance with them afterward. That's the difference between a wise man and a fool. One founds romances upon facts. That's reasoning. The other founds facts upon romances. That's a fool's paradise. You are not a fool, my boy. You started in with the organ playing. Where did you come out?"

"With the conviction that my ideal of all that is honest can both play the organ and sing, exceptionally well," I said.

Still seeming to be feeling his way toward something, he clasped his hands behind his head and said: "The question of veracity is complex and curious. The Psalmist admits that he said in his haste that all men are liars. Men often hit nearest the truth when they speak in haste, and I think that he did. Instinct is Truth. Reason is hypnotized instinct. It frequently finds it advisable to lie. The sharpness of many a thorn is dulled by lies, and many a rough edge rounded. Lies perfume and disinfect the fetid odors of reality. They putty up life's rottenness and varnish out its rust and corrosion. They are honey where the truth would be wormwood. They are cooling where the truth would scorch. From

the first fig-leaf to the last robe of righteousness, Reason has advocated deception. What I said to you was that I never played the organ; and I have not, for many years, until to-night. But it was a lie, for it was intended to produce the impression that I could not play. I preferred you should not know, just as you, when you came in here, preferred I should not know that you came from the rear door of the snugery. Hold on now, my boy. Keep quiet. It was all right, and I haven't finished. The reason why I never play is—"

"Stop, Morton!" I exclaimed. "This is no confessional."

"Certainly not," he replied. "Confession implies crime. Crime is that which does injury—to oneself or some one else. Now a lie which does no injury is no crime. But when the truth is told to do an injury, then the truth becomes a crime. You said you were not feeling just right, and I'm a doctor. It's five guineas after dark, but I can stand it, if you can. What's out?"

After a moment's thought I replied, "Only anxiety."

"About me?"

I nodded.

"Because I have a skeleton which occasionally escapes its closet?"

I nodded again.

"And because when its bones were rattled this afternoon, I turned to the nepenthe which has wrecked so many a physician?"

I could only nod again.

"If the skeleton were yours, Willard, you too would place a syringe on an altar, and kneeling to it say with David, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust him.'"

"I would not if I were Morton," I replied.

"Why?"

"Because he is mightier than I. He knows the effects of alcohol and opium on the heart and brain tissues. He knows the importance of his brain, and that it is a crime to injure oneself."

"But the skeleton is mightier than Morton, Willard. You do not know the skeleton."

Did I? My heart was throbbing to stifle me. This was my first opportunity to help him. If I let it go, I felt that it would be my last. If I was wrong all would be over between us. But with such a man one must be frank if one would remain his friend. Looking steadily in his eyes I said:

"It is the murder of the woman you loved."

His face was as white as death, but it was also as calm as death. His eyes did not flinch, nor his voice tremble, as he asked:

"Is that why you followed me here?"

"O my friend! My friend!" I cried. "By all that is honest in the universe, believe me. I do not so much as know your nationality, nor a word of your history which you have not told me. To-night you drove me to think of something—and there was nothing else. Then you challenged me, and I spoke—simply that you might know that I could understand, could pity you with all my heart, and still could say to you that though I and all the world for less reason might fly to liquor and morphia, you, Morton, have no right to. You must not, and—"

"And I will not, Willard, ever again. Here's my hand. It's too late now, but after dinner come with me to the Den. There's a little tale which I should *like* to tell you. You have not extorted it. It has been for long a thought with me that I should *like* to tell you. And now, feel better. Good-night, and pleasant dreams."

CHAPTER XI

“I’M off early to-day,” Dr. Morton said at breakfast. “If you want a bit of novelty in medical practice, come along. One sailor murdered another down near the wharves last night. He is in jail, apparently crazy, and the court has sent to me for an opinion.”

I should have known him better than to expect any sign of the night before, but when the word “murder,” which sent a chill to my heart, slipped from his tongue as easily as any other, I could have believed that I had dreamed it all.

When we reached the jail the warden said, “He has either taken poison or he is dying in a fit.” A court officer added, “He’s stark mad anyway.”

We found him on a bunk in a padded cell, lying on his back, white and semi-rigid, his eyes half open, with a death-like gaze. “Catalepsy,” the Doctor remarked, giving his head a vigorous shake by the hair, without rousing

him. He made a few more tests, then taking off one shoe and stocking, said: "I'll try tickling the bottom of his foot. Not many can stand that. I say, *Dick!* Osculate! Go on!"

Dr. Morton was fond of instilling monstrous terms into Dick's tiny head, and he had also taught him that for sanitary reasons a dog's kiss should always be on the ear. The little fellow understood, but did not like the assignment. He obeyed spitefully, and while the Doctor tickled the bottom of the man's bare foot, Dick leaped upon the cot and gave his ear one savage lap.

Speaking slowly, and so loud that I fancied the warden must be deaf, Dr. Morton said:

"If it is cataleptic insanity, as I think, he will come out of this trance presently, and be rational till nine o'clock to-night, the hour he committed the murder. Then he will go mad again, and try to kill anything in sight. If you are within reach, he will kill you. We can get him out of it in a few days."

As we drove from the jail he said: "A queer thing, the brain. Cells and fibers and tissues; absorbing nutriment, discharging refuse, carrying messages, storing impressions,

conjuring notions, day and night, without a second of rest, from the cradle to the grave. There are substations of the brain all over the body, more or less developed according as the direct agents, the eyes or ears, for example, fail. First, at the base of the brain is the central station for the automatic machinery,—respiration, pulsation, digestion. Then for erratic action—walking, chewing, etc. Then the storage vaults for impressions,—memory. And over all the outer coating for thought,—the headquarters of the Mind. But the Mind can be—and it ought to be trained to be—in direct authority over every central station and so over every brain cell in the body. Laura Bridgeman, though deaf and blind, achieved wonderful things in life by making other sources serve her Mind. And except when reason interferes the Mind is not at all particular through what office it receives its information just as it follows the path of least resistance in carrying out its conclusions. Hobbies, manias, insanity, and crime are all in the same way the result of brain development,—along deflected lines. That is the secret of all mysterious healing. It simply instigates the Mind to use its authority intelligently

where it has been acting on suggestions from some source to the contrary. It is the secret by which we shall soon be treating every function of the body, physical and moral, through the brain. Genius is only an eccentric development of a few centers,—usually at the expense of others. Insanity and crime are only the abnormal development of faculties which we all possess. In the normal we call them 'Imagination' and 'Ambition.' Overdeveloped they easily become 'Insanity' and 'Crime.' ”

“But, Doctor,” I said, “the man who commits a crime knows that he is wrong and that if he is caught he will be punished.”

“So does the spy in the enemy's country in time of war,” he replied. “He knows that he will hang or be shot for it if he is caught. But he glories in what he is at. There is no difference so far as the man's own interest,—which controls him,—is concerned.”

“But at least he should be punished for the protection of society,” I said.

“Punishing the man is poor protection to society,” he replied. “It only instigates him to be more careful in his wrongdoing when he is free again. Anything short of life impris-

onment simply provides a better educated, more cautious criminal, to impose upon society. When other good things go wrong we repair them. Why do we simply lock men up, and make them worse? The point is this: I am going to save that man up at the jail. He has a wonderfully developed workshop in his skull right along the lines we are on. I am going to have him sent to an asylum, then to our paralyzer. He will agree to it, to save hanging; and we shall have a living proof of the accuracy of our theory of *mental*, not *moral* responsibility for crime,—of the obliteration of evil tendencies through the reformation of the brain.”

“But if he is crazy, how can they hang him?” I asked. “And, by the way, what is cataleptic insanity? I never heard the term before.”

“Neither did I,” replied the Doctor, laughing.

“You don’t mean—”

“I surely *do*. That man was simply shamming; but, by all the gods and little fishes, he did it beautifully. Truth is mighty and will usually prevail if you give it time. But a good lie produces spontaneous conviction.

Those two keepers were so cock-sure of their opinion that he was mad that even before I saw the prisoner I made up my mind that he had lied to them. His Mind was in direct command of every center and thread in his body, holding it in complete paralysis. It is only a trick with him, which he has hit on in some way; but he can do it. I knew that if he were cheating he was keeping himself posted about things through his ears; so I drew all his attention to the bottom of his foot and Dick went for his ear. It was an unexpected shock and his diaphragm cringed. That was all. A rattling good brain, already trained by experience for our work. He heard what I said to the warden, and it is my opinion that at precisely nine o'clock to-night he will do it, to prove to us that he has cataleptic insanity."

CHAPTER XII

AFTER dinner the Doctor said to Kate: "Mr. Willard and I shall be busy in the Den for the next hour, and I must not be disturbed. At precisely quarter past nine ring up the jail and say that I want a report of the cataleptic prisoner. Then call the Den and tell me about it. After that I will see patients. Come on, Willard."

He did not lead the way like a man about to confess a murder that was filling his life with agony,—or to confess anything, if confession implies crime. He smiled as he took his accustomed chair and I mine across the onyx table. His hand rested within an inch of the shrine, as he began:

"You said you didn't know my nationality. But I'll wager good gold that if it were a matter of importance, you could shut yourself up for ten minutes, and—what did I tell you? You have it already."

"Doctor!" I exclaimed. "I do not know! Only this minute the thought came to me that

never before were so many good qualities combined under any but an Irish scalp."

"Good old Ireland!" he said. "She has most that is best and all that is worst in composite man. Yes; I am Irish. But the fact that I am a political convict,—an escaped exile, with a price still on my head, unless the recent act of Parliament removed it,—renders it undesirable that even Kate should suspect my origin. When I was seventeen I was graduated from Christ Church College, Dublin, and began the study of medicine. But the woes of Ireland lay heavy on my heart. An Irishman always goes by his heart, you know; never by his head, like a sensible man. My home was on the Boyne-water, only a stone's throw from the home of John Boyle O'Reilly,—as grand a fellow as ever set foot on sod. The little window of my bedroom looked out on the monument commemorating the victory of William over good old James. How I hated it! I was home on a holiday when they had the grand celebration at the monument, which so nearly disrupted old Ireland again. I did my best to help on the disruption. I had just little enough knowledge of chemistry to make it a dangerous thing. I concocted what

I thought would prove a world-reducing combustible. I planted it at the base of the monument, and set it off at the close of the grand oration. It flung the dirt about, betraying its sinister intent, then fizzled out. I stood close to it, fully expecting to go up with the crowd—but that, you know, is Irish patriotism. I was so close that no one suspected me, and another fellow, who had nothing to do with it, was tried and condemned to death. Then I stepped in and confessed,—for which they mitigated my punishment and made it exile for life. But I came back from Australia as a picked-up castaway, on the vessel which took me out. The captain is dead now, so there's no harm in saying that he was a friend, and arranged it all in advance. And right under the nose of the Law I took up my medical studies in London. I never cared much about chemistry after the fluke at Boyne-water, but I gave myself to the new thing then,—electricity.”

Dr. Morton's voice and manner changed, as music sometimes changes suddenly, from the proud and defiant to the soft and sad, moving you to tears without your knowing why.

“I gave my heart,” he said, “to a perfect

woman,—a nurse in the hospital where I was house-surgeon.”

He turned his hand and touched the spring. The golden gates swung open. The astral fragrance filled the air.

“The one glory of my life is that she loved me,” he said; and distinct as his voice I heard those other words, “I cannot love.”

Trembling in the torture, I said: “Go on, Morton. Go on with your story.”

He looked at me. Then he slowly closed the gates.

“What is it, Willard?” he asked at length. “Is there something in you that is hidden from all eyes? Your cursed self-control is a wall as solid as this about us. Looking in, I see only a polished chamber. Looking out, at mysteriously magnifying perforations, you see me through and through. There is only one fact about you which I seem to grasp: I believe that you are my friend.”

“Morton,” I cried, catching his hand, “I am your friend. For life and death I am your friend. You know me better than I know myself, but when you have finished your story I will tell you everything under Heaven you may care to know about me.”

“Which shall be that so long as I merit your friendship I shall receive it—nothing more,” he said. “Forget this little interruption. You often perplex my comprehension and this time my tongue clothed with words the thought which should have remained naked in my brain. Forget it.”

Taking his hand from mine and laying it on the shrine, he said: “Her mother died when she was born. Her father was a peer,—poor as poverty and only at home in bad company. When she was eighteen, beautiful, and by some miracle pure as Purity, her father sold her to a wreck on the shoals of debauchery, but one possessed of a fortune which he coveted. She had been kept in such seclusion that there was no one to whom she could turn; but one of her father’s friends who seemed to her a better sort,—better by comparison, perhaps,—found her sobbing, induced her to confide in him, then to fly with him to his mother. It was an old plot. There was no mother. His housekeeper played the part and finally persuaded her that her only escape was to marry the one with whom she had fled. It was a mock marriage, the truth of which she only discovered months later, when his wife

returned from abroad. She fled to her father, but he turned her away,—penniless upon the world, in woman's greatest extremity. The baby died; but where and what happened afterward till she came as nurse to the hospital I never knew. Her identity and history were hidden, I think from everyone. What I have told you I learned from her own lips, but she never knew that she told me. I already loved her as I did not suppose a man could love, and she trusted me with a confidence which was unmistakable; but whenever I tried to speak of love, every energy in her was alert to stop me.

“She suffered from insomnia, induced by an internal trouble resulting from her history, which she did not admit to anyone till it had reached the gravest proportions. Often in the midday rest she asked me to put her to sleep, as I frequently treated restless patients, to avoid anæsthetics. I only knew what I had discovered by myself about hypnotism, and one day, through some freak action, she began talking rapidly. Before I realized that she was not conscious she had told me what I have told you. I understood her then, and all the more, for pity, I loved and worshiped her.

She had a beautiful voice, and many an hour we spent together with music. To please her best I played the 'Ninth Sonata.' To please me most she sang the 'Resurrection Hymn.' I accompanied her on the organ the last time I ever touched one until last night.

"But at length she was forced to tell me of her trouble, when it had reached a point where death was inevitable unless her life could be saved by one of the most difficult and dangerous operations then known to surgery. At that time not one in ten had survived, and there was not one record of complete recovery. I told her the situation truly, and that there was but one man living whom I would trust to perform the operation. I told her that I loved her, and on my knees I begged her to marry me first. She was not frightened. She put her hand in mine and said: 'There is only one man whom I will trust. Unless he will perform the operation I would rather die. If he will, I think he will succeed; and if he does, and comes to me again as he has come to-night, I feel sure that I shall be able to tell him that because I love him I will be his wife.'

"No pleading would change her and I went away to prepare for the operation. I had

never even seen it performed, but for two days and a night I studied it, as I never studied before. I bought this for our wedding ring—I was educated in the strictest form of Christian faith—and dipped it in holy water and put it on this finger, to prevent the hand from hurting her. And all that last night long I was on my knees, storming the Mercy Seat as God was never assailed before, offering Heaven every breath of life and every drop of blood in me, if God would only help me through that operation. She was brought to the operating room unconscious. I dared not for my life look into her face, but centered every faculty on the blue point of steel as it went deeper and deeper, till in the tension of the operation I wholly forgot who it was upon the table. I forgot everything but that blade as I watched it creep for inches along a throbbing artery, where the deviation of a hair to one side was death, to the other an unsuccessful operation. I worked on, oblivious, till the operation was finished and the patient saved. And even then I did not realize whose life was saved. The attendant, seeing me sponging out the wound, preparing to close it, relieved the chloroform. The patient was not

conscious, she was only partly coming out. I still held a knife in one hand, over the open wound, as I turned for a fresh sponge, when in a choking, unconscious gurgle the poor girl, even then thinking of me, tried to sing 'Hosanna in the highest.' O my God! I gave a frightful start as I remembered. I dropped the knife. I clutched for it and caught it, but not till it had pierced the artery, and a spurt of her death-blood spattered over my hand."

Morton's face was drawn—and so was mine—in that awful agony. Then he shook himself, and suddenly his tone and manner changed back to that bravado I had so often seen and so poorly understood.

"I didn't faint or do any fool thing, to betray me," he went on. "It was success which proved too much for me. I was prepared for failure. I knew that I had killed her, but that if no one else suspected it she would be taken to her room and die there unconscious of it all. To-day we should still have tried to save her, but then every one would have pronounced it impossible. I caught the spot quickly, to prevent its showing, and left the forceps in, closing the wound myself, so that

my assistant should not know. But when they had carried her away, and my junior and the nurses came up to congratulate me, it was too much. I tore off my operating coat, flung it in their faces, and ran—Heaven knows where. I had left a vial on my mantel to drink its contents quickly, if I failed in the operation. I started to get it; but when I realized anything about myself again I was working before the mast, on a sailing ship, eight weeks out from London. I could do it, for I had made the voyage to Australia and back in a wind-jammer. But how I came there, or what transpired at the hospital when they discovered, I have always tried, successfully, not to know. Probably in my peculiar condition the poison twisted my brain instead of killing me; and to avoid a scandal at the hospital, I fancy, they shipped me on a ten months' obliterating voyage before the mast. They gave me a potent hint that they did not want me back, for in one of two boxes they sent with me they had packed all my degrees, my instruments, and the best of my books. The ring was still on my finger. It has never since been off. Neither has that hand ever again made another fatal slip.

THE DEVIL'S DISCHARGE 111

“I left the ship on the home voyage, for I had no intention of going back to London. I wandered about, doing whatever came to hand for bread. I drove a little one-horse car on Fourth Avenue in New York. I worked as stoker in the coal-hole of the steamer which brought me here. But in the fury of a hurricane, up in iced shrouds, in the hubbub of that dirty street, or facing the white heat of the furnaces, something, catching me off my guard, would flash that falling knife before me, or I would feel the warm blood spurt across my hand, and go again through all that damned, infernal accident, killing the woman who loved me, after a miracle had saved her life. While we were lying at the pier here some evangelists came alongside, and sang a song with that hosanna in the chorus. I heard it and the ship could not hold me. I wandered from bar to bar till my legs would not carry me. I fell down in a vacant lot, and lay groaning,—too much a coward to kill myself, for the fear of some future where the terror would still haunt me. Later I built the sailors’ hospital on that lot. I told you it was not philanthropy when you were glorifying me for the act. It was simply to obliterate

the spot where every time I passed I seemed to see myself.

“It was the night of the last great earthquake here. I watched the buildings crumble, and fall, and burn, and people tortured and dying by hundreds; but it only amused me—till suddenly the thought came to me that some one probably loved each one of them and would be glad to have them saved. It was like handwriting on the wall to me. I was on my feet in an instant, working like a maniac, mad with joy that if she knew she would realize that at last I was doing something to atone. They had it everywhere that I was performing miracles. They dragged me here and there to suffering friends, as if I were a god. And when the worst was over I had only to register my papers and open an office, to be overwhelmed with business, which has never fallen off, no matter what prices I charge to try and check it.

“I was four years building this house, from the stone taken from these excavations. To protect her face, which more than all the world I prized, I had this dome excavated from the very heart of the rock; and if man can defy Nature I think I have defied the earth-

quake here. The Irish word 'Muckross' means Rock of Rest; and for that I chose it.

"What? Kate at the tube? Is it after nine already?" He listened a moment, then, laughing, added: "Good old cataleptic insanity. The man has done just as I told him to. Now, when I see him alone and confess that it was all a joke, to punish him for the joke he played on me, he'll do one of three things,—kill me, kill himself, or lend his brain to our experiments. Let us hope." And laughing still, he left the Den.

CHAPTER XIII

AS time went on I realized more and more the folly of having forced my prejudices against liquor and opium on Dr. Morton. But he stubbornly repelled every effort on my part to retract; and in spite of his increased suffering and his enormous practice, he worked with such zeal in his laboratory that success after success crowned his efforts; and volumes will shortly be written upon the marvelous results. But he bent more and more under the burden.

He returned one day to dinner with the unmistakable lines contracting his face. He left the table early, saying to Kate: "I have important work to-night, requiring solitude. I must not be disturbed. I am going to the Den."

It was the first time since I came to Muckross that he had not insisted upon my company, if there was the chance of his being alone. The pigmy was assuming his right proportions at the very moment when the Man most needed an efficient friend. I went to my room. An hour or more later Kate ran in,

without knocking, and caught my arm, whispering: "He is in the snugery. The doors are shut. He is groaning terribly. Come quick."

"His morphia tube and syringe, Kate," I said. She shuddered, but brought them from his room, and we went down together. At the rear door of the snugery I paused. What had I to do in there? I dared not open it. Only his supreme courtesy had ever brought me within reach of him. Then a deep groan like a knife pierced me, and I flung open the door. Morton was coming toward me. His face was shriveled and yellow. His eyes were bloodshot and staring. He paused for an instant; then, with a savage grin, he crouched like a wild beast, preparing to spring at me. Fortunately I forgot myself; for if I had hesitated then, I doubt if I could have withstood him long enough to call for help. I flung out my hands and ran to him, exclaiming:

"Morton, old man, what a lark you are having!"

Before he could recover I had grasped his wrists. My normal strength was nothing to his, but though he struggled and fought and shouted and groaned, dragging me about the

room while chairs and tables went crashing to the floor, I clung desperately to his wrists, with my eyes fixed on his, hoping for some gleam of sense to which I might appeal. Then a strange thing happened. There suddenly came back to me the dream which so disturbed me after my first night in the Den. I had been through that identical struggle in my sleep. But the dream went further, and instinctively, without a thought of why, I followed it. Bending forward, I said sharply:

“Sleep, man! Sleep! I command you, sleep!”

Nothing that he could have done would have startled me as it did to see those swollen eyelids quiver and close, and to feel the muscles of his arms relax and his hands hang limp and motionless from mine. I stood there panting and helpless, when Kate came up and said, “Thank God, sir, you have hypnotized him.”

I? Hypnotized the great Morton? Hypnotized a raving maniac? Impossible. I could not believe it. I dared not drop his wrists and was in mortal terror lest my voice should rouse him. Yet I tried to recall his methods when many a time I had seen him

resort to hypnotism, and to do as I would if he were really hypnotized.

"You are going to your room now," I said slowly. "You will lie down and remain asleep till your clock strikes nine in the morning. Then you will wake up well and strong and be happy and hungry."

While I was trying to think of what else to say he turned, like one walking in the dark, and went to his room. There he dropped at once upon the divan, profoundly unconscious. In my confusion I had forgotten to include instructions about undressing; and lest we rouse him now, we simply did what we could to make him comfortable, left one light burning, and watched by turns outside his door all night. We were both there, I at least in mortal terror, when his clock struck nine. First there was an incoherent sound, then a natural voice, saying nothing less than, "Jumping Moses!"

Presently Kate's bell sounded, and as she hurried in he said: "Surely I wasn't drunk last night, but I never went to bed at all. And see that light! Been burning all night. And why is not breakfast ready? It is late, and I am hungry."

"Won't you have your bath first, as usual, Doctor?" Kate asked.

"Did I say bath, or breakfast, Kate?"

"You *said* breakfast, Doctor."

"When I ask for fish would you give me scorpion?"

"Fish is it? Do you want fish for breakfast, Doctor?"

"Kate, I want breakfast—and I want it now. And no flounced menu, with scrambled air on toasted shadows either."

"I'll hurry the girls right along and have it in a few minutes, Doctor."

"Which is where you lose out, Kate; for I shall not be here to eat it. I have an appointment with a patient at half past nine. I'm afraid I shall have to operate, and Vinton is to be there to help me. Here, button my collar. If I hadn't had that appointment on my mind to wake me up, I— See here. Rush down and get me a cup of coffee and something cold. I'll eat it while Sam's coming with the brougham. Then call the fellow across the hall and tell him to sleep another hour. By that time I'll be back for my bath and the best breakfast you can muster. Hurry."

At the late breakfast the Doctor's face was

a new study. For the first time his eyes were restless and inquisitive. "At the hospital yesterday," he said, "I saw a surgeon drop a knife into an open wound. It knotted every nerve in me. After dinner I found the Den too small for me and came up for my hat, to go out on the street. Kate was in the hall, and to avoid her I went into the snuggery and shut the door. The next I knew my clock was striking nine this morning, and I was lying dressed on my divan,—nerves steady, head clear, temperature normal, a whale's appetite, and none of the after symptoms of morphia. But my syringe case, which since the night I decided to give up using it has been at the bottom of my drawer, was right on top. I have no recollection of using it—or of anything else. I wonder whether, if you chose, you could throw any light on the subject."

I was too hopeful of my discovery to be wise. "You did not use the morphia, Doctor," I said. "I know, for I went to you in the snuggery."

"I thought so!" he exclaimed. "Only it was so vague—like a dream."

"It might well be," I replied. "You were in a bad way. It was only by a bit of good

fortune that you took my advice and went to your room."

"Good fortune! That is a new name for hypnotism, isn't it?" he asked, startling me with clear evidence that the idea was intensely obnoxious to him. Then instantly he changed the subject.

"Now that we have succeeded in disintegrating electricity," he said, "we have only to develop our instruments, to do away with the entire pharmacopeia—except its antitoxins—through the red current which we have captured, and when we can control the blue current I believe we shall find in it a specific for all germ disorders, free from the overreaching which renders the X-ray and radium so treacherous."

Then as abruptly he turned back again, saying: "I fully appreciated your hypnotic power over me at the philharmonic concert and at the Cathedral, and it was hardly possible for me to believe, our first night in the Den, that you did not yourself realize the fact. It still seems as if you must have some conception of your responsibility for that Easter sermon."

"How could I, when I had none?" I exclaimed.

"My friend," he said slowly, "when you came up behind me on the street that Sunday morning, you wanted something."

"I did," I replied; and shuddered to remember what it was.

"I was turning round to meet you when you said, 'You will follow that boy, and I shall follow you.'"

"I thought something of the kind, but I did not speak," I said.

"That is your way of putting it," he replied. "I certainly heard; for it went against me, but I obeyed. You sat down by the pillar and said, 'We will perform a miracle on that boy.' I did my best at dragging vital forces from everything about us and driving them into his torpid brain. And at last we succeeded, very much to *my* surprise. It opened a new world to me, showing me what instruments could be made to do. But before I had gathered myself together from the exhaustion you said about the sermon: 'What rot. Take your eyes off your cane and look at the priest, while we hammer some sense into him.'"

"Doctor!" I exclaimed.

Without noticing me, he continued: "I had not heard a word of the sermon, so I lost

whatever point you made. But I realized the astounding possibility of thought transference through a second brain to a third. The moment I looked up the priest stopped. Then the word 'science' came into my brain and sounded from his lips. More followed, and when I began to grasp the meaning of them, put together, it gave me a good shock—for I was born a Roman Catholic. I believed you were the Devil himself, making me his cat's paw. It was intensely interesting, or I should have repudiated you, on the spot. Your Mind was working in my brain, to take advantage of a certain knack which I possessed, which you fancied that you lacked, while you possessed the courage of convictions which it was no fancy to suppose that I lacked. You yourself have the ability, whenever it is necessary. All that you really lack is my conscious faculty for exhibition purposes. You driving, in the same way, we have made a strong team ever since, but now that you have at last discovered your power over me, and made intelligent use of it, I must warn you never again to repeat the operation. A doctor seldom cares to take his own medicine, and the only real thing upon which a man prides himself,—espe-

cially an Irishman,—is his inherent individuality.”

Over his face came an expression I had never seen before. His eyes seemed to narrow into piercing points. I realized that my usefulness was at an end. The look lasted but a moment. Then he asked:

“How came the syringe out of place?”

“I took it with me to the snugery,” I said. “And later I threw it into the drawer where Kate told me it belonged.”

“I did not make that promise just to please you, Willard,” he said. “And while I have my senses I shall not break it to please you.”

I should have left Muckcross at once but for Kate's pleading, for he seemed in constant fear of me from that moment, and was suspicious of every act. He failed so rapidly, however, that I had not long to wait. He sat one evening at dinner, unable to eat. Soon, looking at neither of us, with a distorted grin, he said: “I'm going to the Den alone. There'll be a jolly good surprise ready for you there in the morning, Willard.”

Kate, from behind his chair, looked at me. We knew the surprise which would await us

in the morning if he went alone to the Den that night. I struggled for my life to speak, but my lips would not move. He was preparing to rise when he saw my earnest look fixed on him, and shaking his fist at me he shouted, "Damn your eyes, Willard! I'll—" the rest was lost in a guttural gurgle. He sat there as rigid as iron, and utterly unconscious.

"Is it the end, Kate?" I said.

"No, no, sir," she whispered. "You have hypnotized him again. Where there is life there is hope."

"In what?" I asked.

"His instrument. The new one, that makes you forget."

I looked from Kate to the motionless figure, the clenched fist still in the air, the rigid fingers which alone could manipulate the plaything of his brain.

"No one else can operate it, Kate," I said.

"No one but you, sir," she said. "You can try. I will help you all I can. No one shall ever know it if we fail. We must try, or let him die, sir, right here in his chair. I think we ought to try."

She was even struggling to smile through

her tears; but as I looked, a cloud came between us, obscuring them both. Upon it I read a sentence of three words, in letters of fire. Then it disappeared.

CHAPTER XIV

IT was madness to consider Kate's suggestion, and worse to gather courage from a psychic demonstration flashed on my excited brain; but the best medical counsel would have consigned him to a padded cell, to die in agony, and us to perdition had we suggested the use of the paralyzer. However, from the moment when I read those three words I knew that I was to be but an agent for his Mind, and that I must do it.

I went to him and took his hand in mine. Speaking slowly I asked,

"Can you understand me, Doctor, and answer me?"

Instantly the muscles relaxed, and like one speaking in his sleep, hardly moving his lips, he repeated those three words, "Physician, heal thyself."

He seemed to understand my thoughts, without words, and did his best to help us as we guided him to the operating room, where of himself he went to the chair to which the par-

alyzer was attached. His eyes remained closed. His face was leaden and expressionless. He looked like one already dead. But he took the cap in his hands and put it on his head, carefully adjusting the needles. Then his hands fell like dead weights to the arm-rests.

Trembling with fear, I connected the disintegrator and opened the valve. Slowly the indicator crept up the gauge.

“Fifteen. Stop.”

It was like an automaton producing sounds resembling words, but it came from the Doctor's throat and at the instant when the indicator touched fifteen, I shut off the battery, but another fear beset me. His eyes were closed and from where he sat he could not have seen the gauge, even if they had been open. He was seeing through my eyes and it was as easily possible that my fear was influencing him. I had seen him experimenting and operating with the gauge at forty.

“Fifteen is very weak, Doctor,” I said; and my voice sounded as strange as his. Again the sounds replied:

“So are the cells. In an hour they would have collapsed. Let me sleep four days; then

rouse me and we shall know if it is too late."

I wondered if I only thought I heard the sounds, but Kate heard them. I looked at her.

"Do as he says. We must," she whispered.

My finger touched the button for the final act, but I did not dare to press it, when a clearer, sharper voice said: "Go on! I see the knife! O Constance! Constance!"

The last words were a frantic cry, just as the current touched the brain. Perspiration ran like rain down my forehead as, gripping myself, I held my finger on the button through ten seconds, which seemed eternity, while the indicator crept back to zero. Then I removed the cap and Dr. Morton's head fell helplessly back upon the rest. I thought that he was dead, but I had done my best and stood looking sadly into that strange, impassive face, where there was nothing, even in death, which I could comprehend, till Kate, laying her hand upon his forehead, said:

"He is not dead, sir. You hypnotized him in the dining-room. He must still be under the influence. Perhaps he can help us to get him to his room."

He did help us a little, and for four days

and nights I sat beside his bed, while brave, heroic Kate was everything to us both. Patients and callers were easily turned away at first with the statement that Dr. Morton was not well; but later Muckross was stormed with inquiries amounting to ill-concealed demands, as the rumor got abroad that the trouble was serious. Newspapers published astonishing manufactures about the mysterious illness of the world's greatest neurologist, commenting on the fact that not one of his fellow practitioners was in attendance. It was in threatening clouds that the last hour of the four days came.

Kate carefully removed all signs of a sick-room, and waited outside the door. I sat on the bed, holding Morton's hand in mine, without an idea of what I ought to do to rouse him, dreading the result, when I should have succeeded. It might be but a faint flutter of life, subsiding in actual death; but there might be a frantic struggle of the Mind to grasp again a shattered brain, and the life might go out in torture and suffering. Fondling the nerveless hand, I even wondered if it might not be better to try and keep what little remained as it was rather than lose him alto-

gether. However, in a weak voice I began:

"The time is up, Doctor. When you wake you will feel well, and strong, and happy. You will have no pain, nor trouble. You will not remember anything since you left the hospital. You must open your eyes now, and—"

Had I spoken to an Egyptian mummy and seen it instantly obey those words, open its eyes, look clearly, intelligently, lovingly, into mine and smile, I could not have been better stunned. My face showed it. The smile disappeared from Morton's lips, and he said, "I say, Willard, are you a ghost, or is it one you see?"

"Neither, Doctor," I replied, trying to pull myself together. "You came from the hospital so ill that I was frightened. Are you all right again?"

"Right as the bank," he said. "It was the worst case of goiter I ever struck; close along the jugular for inches, so that my nose was tight over the chloroform all the time. It stupefied me a bit, and right at the end of the operation the big vein made a fool jump and ran into the point of my knife before I could dodge it. The blood spurted all over me, but I caught the spot in time and saved the wom-

an's life. She will be about again in a week, and never know how near she came to knocking at the pearly gates for Peter. I did worse than that once long ago. Oh, you remember, I told you how I spoiled a dandy operation on a nurse in the hospital in London. But I say, boy, brace up! You're white as a sheet. Why, I never felt better in my life. The big dose of chloroform sent me into a long sleep which has done me worlds of good. And, by the way, how goes the enemy? Ring for Kate. I'm hungry."

He raised himself on his elbow, looked at his clock, and said: "Ten to eight? What eight is that? Is it last night or to-morrow morning? Gangway, my boy. I must be off."

I had not even strength to reply, but again Kate came to the rescue. Entering with her imperturbable assurance, smiling as she said: "You don't get up the night, Doctor, take my word. It's time you experienced the pleasure of which you give so much,—of being kept between sheets. Your dinner will be served up here as soon as it can be got."

"Hear that?" the Doctor said. "You'd think I had a wife instead of a housekeeper.

In the meantime I'm getting up. You can think that over, Kate."

"I'll think over nothin', sir," Kate replied firmly, as she lowered the shades and turned on the light. "Mr. Willard is near death if you are not. For it's not one day but four you've been there, and he has never left your side. 'Twould be an insulting shame to jump and run the moment you open your eyes, just as if you'd been fooling him. I'll serve the dinner for the two of you, up here."

Dr. Morton dropped back on his pillow, bewildered by the announcement. But he was all right the next morning, and the press and the public agreed with him that the enforced rest had done him good. Kate and I watched in vain for any return of the old trouble. The little instrument had spoken its "Out, damned spot!" with the voice of authority even over its creator; but what haunted me was the way he spoke of the operation on the nurse in the London hospital. A sickening fear beset me, and I only waited for an opportunity to test the truth. It came when Dr. Morton sat on the floor of the snugery, rollicking with Dick. I went to the organ, and when he was wholly off his guard I broke into the fatal strain of

the "Resurrection Hymn," singing as I played, "Hosanna in the highest! in the highest!"

Without looking up he said: "You should sit on a sheet of paper, to reach that highest 'highest' properly. That London nurse I was telling you about would get right up there and look over the top, without half trying. Whatever was her name, now? Blest if I can remember." And he went on playing with Dick.

Instead of triumph, I was plunged into regret too deep for words. For the one real thing in Morton's life was his love for that lost, that unforgotten girl. It permeated every ambition and impregnated every act. It warmed the neutral tints and softened the glaring lights in him. It was that which held him from the mire in which he had so often tried to hide himself. It was the far-reaching radiance of the beatific moment when I saw him at the organ which made him always unlike other men; and I had robbed him of it. My work had made the difference between those two sentences,—"The one glory of my life is that she loved me" and "Whatever was her name, now? Blest if I can remember."

The current from the paralyzer was guided

by the patient's fixing his Mind upon the thoughts he would forget, tempting it along those abnormally agitated threads, leaving them in complete paralysis, without other effect upon the brain. It was easy enough to understand how his last cry of "Constance!" indicated that Dr. Morton's thoughts were as much of the woman as of the accident, and how both centers, instead of only one, had been paralyzed. But what did it signify to know more than that it was done—and that I had done it?

"You told me once that her name was Constance," I said.

"That's right," he replied. "Forgetting names is supposed to be an indication that one is growing old. But look at this bally little beggar, Willard. Old as he is, he has learned a new trick."

Down in the Den I tried again. After a long hunt for it I found the spring and opened the golden gates. Morton glanced at the face with a smile, remarking:

"How horrified the world would be if it knew of the multitude of accidents which snuff out lives on the operating table. The best surgeon never knows for sure what his knife is

going to strike, even when he holds it fast. Of course it was stupid of me to drop one. But it was more stupid to let the accident bother me as it used to whenever I thought of it."

"Didn't you tell me that you loved each other?" I asked.

"I fancied so," he said. "And if she had lived I presume we should have married and settled down in London—and all that Muckross stands for never would have been." He shrugged his shoulders and lighted a cigarette—and almost said, "How fortunate."

Samson was shorn of his tresses. Morton was still a monarch, but the omnific charm was gone,—the charm that enhances the purest gold and gives luster to the brightest diamond,—Love. And it was I who did it.

Woe to the world because of offenses. But woe unto him by whom the offense cometh. I might have settled down to bear this burden of remorse till my back became used to it, but Fate,—or the glove-button,—had further plans for me, and to expedite them an incident almost immediately plunged me headlong into new retribution which I could not endure in silence.

CHAPTER XV

DR. MORTON left me at the hotel one morning where I had an appointment. As I sat down in the waiting-room the only other occupant remarked, "The man who came in with you looked enough like a man I used to know to be his twin brother."

"His name was Morton," I replied indifferently.

"That's damned odd," he added, turning his newspaper. "The man I knew was a Morton,—a Dr. Morton,—senior surgeon in a hospital where I was junior. He was years younger than I, but, Jove! he was a corker. Went to pieces and disappeared from the face of the earth after as brilliant an operation as was ever performed. It was on one of the nurses, and I'm damned if the visiting surgeon, who took the case when Morton vanished, didn't finally claim it, operation and all, and make eternal fame and fortune out of it."

The man had forgotten me. He was ruminating, talking to the toe of his boot, as he went

on: "It was the first case on record of a thoroughly successful operation and complete recovery. But the strain of it was too much for the boy. He went daft right at the operating table the moment he was through. Flung his coat in our faces and ran. We found him smashing in the door of his room, because it was locked and he hadn't sense enough to turn the key. He was the strongest fellow I ever knew. It took six of us to get him into a strait-jacket, and we sent him right away to the nervine up north, in charge of two stalwart fellows. But when the train reached the destination, and the guard opened the door, there both men lay, sound asleep, and Morton gone. All that was left of him was his strait-jacket, neatly folded and laid on the seat. It was generally supposed that he committed suicide. He was raving when he left the hospital,—howling about a knife that was falling and killing the patient, then wailing for a bottle of something; we couldn't make out what."

"Did you say that the patient lived?" I asked.

He turned to me in surprise. He had forgotten that I was listening.

"Lived?" he said. "She was at work in the

wards again in three weeks. She is matron in the same hospital now. Why she stays God only knows. She's the handsomest woman I ever saw. Many a nobleman has gone mad over her. When I was last home on leave, some howling swell was so determined to have her that, with the help of a friend, he got her into a cab one stormy night, pretending that an old patient was dying and wanted to see her. They bound and gagged her, and started out on a champion elopement, when some fellow on the street butted in and rescued her, and—"

"But what became of Morton?" I asked, perspiration starting on my forehead.

"No trace was ever found of him—or of his luggage either, for that matter, for which I have kicked myself ever since. I packed his things and sent them with him, only to save him worry when he came to himself,—for he had some dandy books and instruments, some of them he'd made himself, and I've always wished I'd kept them. The guards swore they didn't know anything about what happened. They were punished on the probability that he had suicided on their hands and that they had disposed of him some way. But I always believed them, for I knew that Morton was a

perfect devil at hypnotism. He could put you to sleep, or make you obey him while you were awake, and without even looking at you. I've always believed he fixed those men, made them take off his jacket, get out his luggage, and then go to sleep. He had to be sane for that, but he might have gone raving again and killed himself, and some one who saw it might have buried him and kept his luggage."

The man I was waiting for came in. I was obliged to go with him, and returning as soon as possible I found that my companion was surgeon on a battleship, then leaving the bay under sealed orders.

I held my peace, for what else could I do? I had wrought such havoc that after his years of love and suffering it might even do more harm than good to tell Morton the wonderful news. And I had battle enough to fight out with myself. The first thoughts that came to me I would rather forget; but, after days of bitterness, I came to see that if I really loved her I must forever ignore the hope I cherished, and that if I really loved Morton I must undo the damage I had done.

At first I thought of hypnotism. Morton had lost all fear of me and all suspicion. If

possible we were closer friends than ever and one night in the Den I referred to his claim that I had power over him. He insisted that he was right, and told me to go ahead and prove it then. He suggested ways to me and did all in his power to throw himself under my influence, but I could not produce the first result. Laughing, he repeated:

“I insist that you have the talent, Willard, whenever there is a necessity. All that you lack is my tact for exhibition purposes.”

I tried, by myself, to discover some counter-power in electricity, only to find how far beyond me was the first step. Not till I was nearly discouraged did it occur to me to secure *her* aid. She thought him dead. How quickly she would come to him, if she knew the truth. I thought of a cable, then of a letter; but finally decided to go myself and fetch her. I had the right, for it did not pertain to love—to loving me. It was only a question of mortal man's ability to go to the Woman he worshiped and plead for another man. I resolved to try. Morton never asked questions. He accepted the fact that important business called me to London, only demanding that I should immediately return to Muckross.

We sat together for my last evening in the Den, as ever discussing the subject of endless interest to both of us,—the progress of the work.

“I suppose that it accords with the universal unfitness of things that we never come nearer to the Promised Land than seeing a little more and a little more from peaks of progressive Pisgahs,” he said. “First we struggled simply for power to touch the brain with scientific certainty, and we obtained it. That demands that we divide electricity, and we did it, catching the red current and training it for our purposes. Now we are goaded to catch the blue, which we believe will reconstruct just as the red destroys. As the red carries death to each damned spot we would wipe out, we are sure now that the blue will carry life to torpid functions, and even to the entire body until pectoral change has actually taken place; that we can say to the widow’s son, ‘Rise up and walk,’ and even to buried Lazarus, ‘Come forth!’ with the remaining probability of a third ingredient which will prove the vehicle of thought. Why, man! we shall be robbing hell of its victims, death of its sting, and the grave of its victory. We shall save humanity

the necessity of throwing responsibility for suffering either upon the Devil or Omnific Love by showing it how easily all suffering can be avoided, that all evil is mental,—not moral,—and can be blotted from the world by mental sanitation as easily as malignant fevers are blotted out by common sense precautions. If there is a God, he will be grateful to us, Willard, for proving that he is not culpable. And if there is a Devil, he is riding to his downfall, covering your devoted head with curses.”

I made an effort to interrupt him, as always when he fell into that line,—trying to shift his achievements to my shoulders. But he went right on:

“Doing evil that good may come is at the root of all that we call crime. I know that according to the Scriptures it is also an attribute of God, from the installation of Satan to the climax on Calvary. But it is damnable, nevertheless; and we shall wipe it out, together with the services of Satan, and any need of vicarious salvation. The time cannot be far distant now when we shall be prepared to give to the world a fully developed system, without the fear of a premature delivery which has been the death of so many an immaculate con-

ception; and the nations dwelling in darkness shall see the spark which clicked on Franklin's key kindle the fire in Hejaz, which in Bashra shall cause the camels' necks to shine. I'll do my best with the blue current while you're away, Willard, and I'll have good news for you when you return."

Then came his parting words, which to my heart, at least, bore all the sweet pathos of his strange but beatific life. He stood on the pavement as I entered the carriage. He held my hand in his, and said:

"May all evil be far from you, and all good be with you, till we meet again."

CHAPTER XVI

ON the voyage back to London I found that the fight had not been fought to the finish. All the dead dreams I had buried on the way out came up from the sea to change my purpose. The broad wings of the albatross flashed like flaming swords ready to close the gate of Eden behind me. The silent glare of the incessant sea was maddening. The flying fish shot always away from me. Mother Carey's chickens laughed as we reeled in the gale. The brown Cape-ducks and mottled gulls seemed piping me "A thing outside."

I sent my card to the matron of the hospital, and waited in the nurses' parlor, wondering if she would remember me, and if she remembered whether she would trust my promise and see me; and if she came whether I could keep it. I knew that if just once I could feel her arms about me and hear her say, "Beloved, I can love you now," I could die in a delirium of joy; but could I plead with her for him? She opened the door. The years vanished.

The fragrance of the rose engulfed me. I dared not look above the perfect hand she gave me. She said:

"I hoped that some day there would be a service which I could render you in a slight return for what you did for me, and that you would come and tell me."

I could not speak. In another instant I should have been upon my knees.

"What is it that I can do for you?" she asked.

I had forgotten why I came. I thought, and stammered, "You remember—yes, of course you remember Dr. Morton?"

Her hand slipped from mine. She motioned me to a chair and seated herself on the other side of the room. Astonished, I glanced at her face. It was flushed. The lips were compressed. Her eyes had changed. In a voice that was wholly unlike her own she said:

"I knew him when he was connected with this hospital."

"He is still alive!" I exclaimed.

"One would be poorly posted not to have read that he quickly recovered from his recent illness," she replied.

"Pardon me, madam," I said. "I am making a mistake. I came on behalf of Dr. Morton, to find a nurse, Constance; and I thought that you were she."

"I am," she replied. "And whatever you may ask of me for Dr. Morton I shall remember that to both of you I owe my life."

"But, madam, he loved her and she loved him," I exclaimed.

"I shall remember. Can you not give me your errand?" she asked.

I was almost beside myself. "I have been his closest friend ever since I left London," I said. "I have seen him suffer through his love for you till it brought him to the door of death, in what you speak of so calmly as his recent illness. How can you—"

She stopped me. I do not know how; and after a moment's silence she said:

"In the years since then I have realized the shock it must have been to one like him when he discovered, as I lay on the operating table, what he had loved when he loved—me. I did not appreciate it then, or I should have saved him. That I too have suffered these white hairs testify. It cannot increase my willingness to respond to any reasonable request, to

tell me that his life is still poisoned with bitter thoughts of me. Have I not now been frank enough, Mr. Willard, to avoid further delay?"

In my confusion I said: "It was only upon one condition that you gave me the right to come back to you—else how many times and for how long I should have been here, pleading for myself! I did not know until three months ago that you and he had ever met. I believed with him that the one he loved had died from the operation. Until this minute I thought that you believed him dead. Now, by my love for you, through all these years—when I have proved it by keeping away, though to do it I had to leave London—because I love you still—madly, desperately love you—believe me, oh, believe me, when I say that you are making some terrible mistake. It would be utterly incomprehensible to him—what you say about his making a discovery leaving bitter thoughts of you. I love you, madam, and I love him. I am trying to be loyal to you both—Heaven only knows how hard it is. Will you not, in mercy, tell me what you mean?"

She sat with her eyes fixed on the floor, flush

and pallor alternating. Suddenly she looked up and said:

“I told you that you must not love me, because I could not love. I will answer your question for your sake,—not for his, because he needs no explanation. It will help you to forget me. I was never married. He knew it. But during the operation he discovered that I had been a mother. I knew that he would and intended that he should. I had tried in vain to tell him with my lips. I demanded that he perform the operation, because I wanted him alone to know it. I did not realize its awfulness. I thought of circumstances which seemed to me to mitigate; and I believed that when I told him of them afterward he would pity and forgive me. I left a letter explaining them to him, in case I died. But neither did I die nor did he come to me. And as I lay, with time to think, I realized it all, and saw how impossible it would have been for him ever to have looked into my face again.”

“But, madam,” I interrupted, “you surely know that he was utterly unconscious of what he was doing when he went away.”

“I know that he made people think so,” she

said. "He gave up the most brilliant career which London ever promised, and stole away, under the pretense of madness, rather than denounce one whom he had loved and who had deceived him."

"But he believes this minute that during the operation he made a slip, and that you could not possibly have lived an hour after the operation. Because he loved you so it drove him crazy. I tell you he did not even know his own name till weeks later, when he found himself far away from London. And because he thought you dead he would not, for his life, come back. He made no discovery, as you think. Forget that I am a man. Remember only that I love you, and let me speak. He knew the whole story of your misfortune long before the operation. You told him once when you were in an hypnotic sleep. It was before he asked you to be his wife, and I have it from his own lips that he only loved you and respected you all the more. By an accident I learned that the woman he loved was still alive—and that she was the Woman I worshiped. There were reasons why I could not tell him—why the only thing that I could do was to come to you. Listen to me—you

must listen to me—while I explain them. Then you will help me.”

“I will listen,” she said. But even after I had finished, her only answer was, “I am glad that all is well with him at last; and I am sure that matters should remain as they are.”

“Oh, madam!” I cried. “Don’t send me back with that. Have you utterly forgotten that once, at least, you loved him too?”

“*He* has forgotten,” she said. “Let us confine ourselves to him. It was only the mortification of a master that his hand had made a fatal slip which goaded a boy’s sympathy for the victim. He was right when he laughed over the boy’s infatuation after he had forgotten the chagrin. It would have had the same result if you could simply have told him that I did not die. And even if memory of those youthful pledges and his sense of honor had driven him to repeat his question, I should surely have told him No. For I realize now how unworthy I am to be his wife.”

“*Madam!*” I exclaimed, angry over her calmness. “You have wrapped a holy love in swaddling clothes of abnegation, and buried it so deep in a manger, under straw of self-condemnation, that you see nothing but the

blanket and husks which swine eat. True love looks into the future,—not into the past. Perfect love casteth out fear. It does not grovel in gone blunders. The Goddess of purity is not on the accepted altar where the two-faced world kneels to bedizened Chastity. I know it! for I too love you. I worship you as a pure, white rose, without a thorn.”

Then suddenly there came to me a thought, so simple, so in accord with the atmosphere of Muckross, that the wonder is it had kept so long away. No longer afraid, I knelt at her feet. I took her hands in mine. I looked into her eyes and said:

“You are drifting on the very rocks where Morton was so nearly wrecked. Your Mind has fortified itself in those morbid centers beyond the reach of any argument. I know that you are wrong and you would be glad to believe me, if only for your own comfort. You might even try to accept my word, but it would not convince you. You are always vainly trying to drive the unhappy thoughts away. You dread old age, with the haunting memory growing stronger as you grow weaker,—as if by torturing it could help you. Would you not be glad to be rid of them?”

Without hesitation she replied, "I would."

"Then that is why I came," I said. "I thought it was for Morton, but really it was for you. The operation is as harmless and as effective as locking one door in these wards to prevent people from making themselves a nuisance by going that way. Morton is so sure that you are dead that you can most easily prevent his suspecting. Simply say to him that your memory clings to an incident causing you needless suffering. Keep your face covered with a veil, if you like. He never asks a question,—not even a patient's name. You will sit in a chair. He will place a cap on your head from behind, and tell you to fix your mind upon the thought that troubles you. In ten seconds, though you have felt nothing, he will remove the cap and tell you your troubles are over. He will instantly leave you and you can go out when you like. You will not have forgotten anything—not even how the thoughts used to trouble you. But you will think them through new channels. They will never annoy you any more. If I were fortunate enough to do anything for you which warranted me in asking a favor, do this for me and I will leave the rest to you. I will

not come to you again, but if, when it is over, you are willing to help me to restore to Dr. Morton the joy of which I robbed him,—the joy of loving you,—you will find me at Muckross.”

To my surprise and joy, she said softly, “I will go to him.”

I kissed the hands I held and went away, leaving her sitting there.

CHAPTER XVII

THE voyage back seemed to my soul an endless ovation of triumphant song. The gulls softly sang "Hosanna!" The brown duck cut the curve of each blue upheaving as the tone swings in the grand refrain. The petrels filled the air with their weird chirping,—atoms in immensity, but part of it, part of its hosanna. The flying fish glistened in the joy of living, when the night is o'er. Through tropical days the blue waves whispered it, and the great albatross, their broad wings motionless upon the air, swung this way and that, as if they were Nature's baton, beating time to "Hosanna in the highest!"

And at last I sat again in the dear old Den, with Morton across the onyx table. I had only arrived that afternoon. My luggage was not yet unstrapped. Every minute that could be wrested from patients had been spent in telling me of the marvelous progress made during my absence.

"It is finished!" Morton said. "Dear old boy, only think of our being able to say that word. But let me tell you: if I had realized that Easter Sunday that the sermon you preached through me was only an outline of work which you proposed to perform through me, I should have cried out, 'It is impossible!' Yet you have conquered. It is done. Science is all that you said of it. And how you have stuck to it till the last jot and tittle was accomplished."

"You are getting confusion worse confounded, Doctor," I interrupted. "I have told you twice that I had no more to do with that sermon than the boy at your elbow; and I had less to do with what followed."

"Willard," he said, "I have already proved that the contrary is true of part, and now, if you will only listen, I will prove that it is true of *all*. I fought against the sentiments of that sermon all the voyage home; for I was in the grip of the hypnotic influence of Christian ages. But I came to realize that you had laid on solid ground the only possible foundation for the structure I was trying to build in air. Science is omnipotent, *because* it is the delineator of the divine."

“Of course it is, Doctor,” I interrupted. “You taught me to see it. I wonder these very walls don’t laugh at you. You have laboriously dragged out Nature’s secret, which suffering brains and bodies have waited long enough to learn. And you are the fittest man on earth to have done it, for you have not sufficient sense of self to gather a thread of flame from a blaze of glory, to make even a ring halo for your own cranium. Where other men would ride the clouds, like little gods on big tin wheels, because by accident they had hit upon a happy discovery, you limp along the pavement, out of preference, though Heaven’s own chariot of fire is waiting for you at the curb. So far it’s so good, old man; for you are really mightier,—as is any one, if he only knew it,—down upon the pavement than up in treacherous clouds. But when a triumph like this drives even you to an ecstasy which must have vent, and you try to shift it off on me so that you may have a back to pat, you’re taking a long step too far. If you should hint it outside this Den, your nearest friend would say that too much learning had made you mad. And he’d be right about it, too.”

"I never heard you say so much at once in all my life," Morton replied. "But now, if you have relieved yourself and can listen, I'll produce my proof. When you came into the club that first night I was so disheartened that I was on the verge of suicide. The moment you looked at me you said,—of course I know that you will tell me now that you only said it to yourself,—but you said, so that I heard you: 'Shame on you, Morton; spending your time in drinking, smashing cues, and cursing. Shame!' You made me invite you to dinner, but you said: 'All this is superficial. Those whose outer doors stand widest open are the most likely to keep the real treasures of the house in all-proof vaults. Open the inner doors to me. I am here to know you and understand you.'"

Thoughts which had flitted through my brain when I first came to Muckross he was repeating with the quiet assurance of one reading from a book.

"So I opened doors for you. I told you about myself. I showed you my laboratory, with all its imperfect efforts at great ends. I reeled off pet fancies and vague dreams which I would have sworn that the tortures of an

inquisition could not have dragged from me in their crude state. Even then I realized the help you were affording me, for my imperfect thoughts grew and gathered strength like mushrooms. Ideas were conceived, developed, and delivered in a single conversation under your forcing process. But unfold as I would you were not satisfied. You kept on saying. 'More. This is not what you really are.' I rebelled when it came to the Den; for I had sworn no living man should enter here. But I brought you in. I tried to pacify you by showing you how you had obliterated dusty dogmas in me and taught me humanitarianism; but you were not pacified. I tried to distract you by performing my little trick with Kate; but by a single question to Kate you disclosed a gigantic problem, and set me to solving it. You were not distracted. You grew impatient, however, and, without so much as looking, you touched a spring that I would have defied you to find and opened those gates. 'That is the door I meant,' you said. 'That is the secret of your life. Just now it is hampering you. See how you are cringing. But I will force you to control yourself this minute, and before long I will

open those doors again and you will only smile.' Well, you did it. You had caught me so unawares that the fiend was clutching my throat and choking me as never before. But in five minutes the whole effect had vanished,—which never before had lasted less than hours. I could have taken my oath that morning that instead of being the Devil, as I thought you first, you were a god, performing miracles."

I might have laughed or cried over Morton's figment,—a combination of suggestive facts so singularly misinterpreted. But as usual he gave me no opportunity. He went right on:

"Believe me, Willard, no more welcome guest has ever entered an open door; and every day has found me appreciating you better than the day before. But realizing your mission I have fought you from start to finish. I hoped you would succeed, but—I am Irish.

"That night in the snuggerly I believed that I was doomed. I hated to leave the work unfinished. I knew that you could save me, and I could have fallen on my knees to you for help, but when I saw you coming I did my best to kill you. I confess it. The only

thing that I do not understand is how I failed. You kept on staving off the end and pushing me on to greater efforts till at last it got me with such a fury that I gave up. I was tired out. I felt myself dying at the table, and only longed to get to the Den to die beside *her* picture. I saw you preparing to do something, and I knew that while you lived I could not die. I made a break for you, determined to kill you. Four days later I found you sitting on my bed, fondling the hand that was thirsting for your gore. I also found myself free from that old torrent. It set me thinking, Willard,—patching the pieces of the puzzle together. Thinking is your specialty,—and a marvelous quality, when held back by your cold-blooded disinclination to jump at conclusions. I tried to emulate you. I thought till I had it all, and knew at what cost of mental nerve and physical courage and vital energy the friend whom I so loved and hated had stood by me, risking far more than his patient, suffering infinitely more, without even the compensation of intelligent gratitude.”

“Morton,” I cried, “will you let up on that nonsense?”

“Not while you call it nonsense,” he replied,

smiling. "The night when I came into that concert, against my will, where you had come from thousands of miles away, for no better reason, I saw nothing but you from the moment I entered, and I kept my eyes on the floor lest I rush up and shake hands with you. You said to me: 'Sit down by that fellow across the aisle. Let him touch the hem of your garment. We will begin right now.' And we have been working together in the same way,—you driving,—ever since. I have been the machinery, but I needed you. You have always been the master, in command; but you needed me. Something in us forced us to find each other."

"Morton," I said, "if consciously or unconsciously I have helped you, I am infinitely glad. But it makes me feel a fool to have you talk this way, when after all these years I could not manipulate your simplest instrument for even a trivial operation."

"The master of the bridge need not be an engineer," he said. "Yet you did operate the most complex of them all; and you succeeded in a case which I should have abandoned as beyond the possibility of success. Sit down again, Willard," he said firmly, as I sprang

to my feet. "When the blue current was caught, and the new reviver finished, and I found that it worked perfectly in restoring to normal action all baser forms of paralysis, I needed a case to test it on the delicate brain tissues, and I was so sure of my conclusions that I—"

"Morton!" I cried. "Did you—"

"Easy, boy! Certainly I did," he interrupted me. "I deliberately put my own head into the reviver cap,—proving my confidence in you and your ability. And the result not only proved the accuracy of the instrument but of my convictions concerning the courage, the skill, and the friendship of my friend. Either your current was very weak, or mine too strong. For a second my brain seemed on fire, and without the slightest intention, I shouted, '*Constance!*' But it all passed off and I felt no ill effects. It revived all right, however, for only yesterday for the third time an accident flashed that knife before me, and set me cringing. Evidently, through having been forced away so long, my Mind is not to be so free there as it was. I had myself under control in a moment. It is a valuable hint for us, in our treatment of the brain. But greater,

—infinitely greater,—than the relief from the suffering, Willard, was the joy of thinking again, as I used to think, of Constance and our love. It's better, if you have loved and lost, to let the love linger than it is to forget to love. Only it has seemed to rouse in me a restless longing to be loved again by something tangible,—to live and love, like other men. Perhaps it was that feeling which influenced me to-day—or possibly I have not met before one who could have filled *her* place.”

Reverently he touched the spring. The fragrance of the white rose,—but without the thorn,—drifted like *pax vobiscum* about me as I watched on Dr. Morton's face the same expression which I saw that night at the organ.

“I wonder why I long so to be loved again,” he said. And after a silence: “Last evening a patient came for an operation. I did not see her face, but ever since I have been longing to know more. Don't look so troubled about it, boy. It has not seriously ruffled the even tenor of my way; and it was not a giddy girl. In fact, it was a white-haired woman. What? Worse yet? Your nerves are unstrung, Willard. It is not like you to show yourself in that way. Besides, it was only

something in the atmosphere which attracted me,—only a feeling of loneliness which will pass off now that you are back. It was something in her voice. She said that an incident she would forget disturbed her; and not another word. But the voice tingled all through me till—I couldn't help it—I looked out of the window as she drove away. She came in one of Warden's carriages. That is absolutely all there is to it, and I've told you so that you can turn it over in your cold-blooded way to-night, and let me know what you think in the morning."

"I've thought already, Morton," I said, keeping my eyes fixed on the shrine, lest they betray me. "I think your patient was a lady who must have come from London by the other steamer, which got in a little ahead of mine,—a lady whom I met there and advised to come to you."

"What is the matter, Willard?" Morton asked anxiously, leaning over the table and laying his hand on my shoulder. "Is she a friend of yours, and do you think I would rob you of her if I knew?"

I could not contain myself. I sprang to my feet, exclaiming: "Yes, Doctor. She is a

friend of mine. Thank Heaven, she is my friend, and now she always will be. I went to London to fetch her,—to bring her back to you,—because she is—Constance! the Constance whom you love!”

He started back,—one hand on his forehead, the other pointing toward the shrine.

“Not *that* Constance?” he whispered.

Catching his hand, to keep him while I spoke, I said quickly: “She is that Constance, Doctor. After I had robbed you of your love, I learned that she was still alive, completely recovered, and matron of the same hospital. I would not tell you, in the way you felt, so I went to London. I found her so tortured with remorse,—believing that you only discovered her secret while you were operating, and that, thinking she had deceived you, you pretended to be crazy, to get away without denouncing her,—that she had grown to think herself utterly defiled and unworthy of being loved. I could not shake her, but I forced her to promise me that she would come to you, simply for that operation, to rid her of the constant torture. Now, you can do the rest. Go to her quickly—and all good be with you till we meet again.”

CHAPTER XVIII

SITTING alone in the Den, I sang with my very soul:

“Jerusalem! Jerusalem! Sing, for the night is o’er!
“Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna forevermore!”

But suddenly it came to me that at last I knew the man! that I understood him; that my mission to Muckross was ended. For lo, the whole of life is love. It covers, it envelopes, it engrosses everything. The ethereal theory of Omnific Love is all that holds men to religions. Loving and being loved is all that makes life worth living. From the Alpha of Time to the Omega of Eternity there is nothing if there is not Love. But where Love is, there is everything.

Muckross was complete without me. I was only mortal,—only a man outside. I was glad it was so, but I could not be a part of the happiness I had so dearly bought. I must go. My luggage had not been unstrapped. I telephoned for a cab, wept a parting tear with

Kate, gave Dick a parting pat, and in thirty minutes I was on an express, whirling through the night toward a distant port where the mail caught a departing steamer.

Second thoughts,—homesick thoughts,—assailed me so fiercely that I was thankful when the lines were cast off and the strip of blue-black water widened between me and the pier, preventing my return. Only then a steward handed me a wire, languidly remarking that it came an hour before, but that he could not find me. It was from Morton, saying, "Come back, dear friend, if only for an hour. It is important." Had I received that wire when it came, no power on earth could have dragged me alive from the pier. But the Fate which began with the off-come of my glove-button was now as clearly saying: "It is finished. Go."

I could not leave the place where I was standing, alone in the stern. Leaning on the rail, I watched the last line of land disappear, and the shadows of night sink upon the water.

Passengers leave the decks early the first night at sea. Everything was deserted. I was alone with my thoughts of Morton—and

of *her*. Suddenly I felt a presence and turned. "Morton!" I cried, and threw out my arms to embrace him. Then I staggered back against the rail, for my hands swept through empty air. He laughed that good old boyish laugh of his, saying:

"If Willard himself will let his sense of touch defy his inner consciousness, what wonder that strangers doubt. My boy, the solid part of me is far away, clutching a couple of wires. Constance is at the generator. I wired you because I had caught the third current and harnessed it, and I wanted your help at demonstrating it a vehicle of thought. You did as you pleased as usual; and also as usual you helped better than if you had followed me; for here I am, frightening you half to death with the grand result of your instigation, developing my little trick with Kate.

"If you do not accept your own work, Willard, how can you expect that others will accept it? Is not instinct Nature's opinion, and reason man's perversion of it? When you dream do you not see, and hear, and feel, without the aid of your senses? Will no one ever believe what he knows to be true, if some accepted theory seems to refute it? But tell me,

Willard, why did you leave us when more than everything else we both wanted you?"

"I don't know, Morton," I replied. "I did not want to. It had to be; and I suppose whatever is, is right."

"Oh, Willard, Willard," he said, with a sigh. "Why do you cling so to the conventionality of words? Of all men you know that whatever is, is usually wrong. From the cradle to the grave we are combating things that are, to make them what they ought to be. Does the man who preached that Easter sermon tell me now that whatever is, is right? How deeply we are buried down in the ruts of this deep-rutted world. But, Willard, there is something more. How can I say it? I know. Constance has told me all. Could I have done the same for you? I am glad I was not tested. But Constance wants me to ask yet more of you. There seems to her a gulf between the old hospital times and to-day. She wishes that she knew all about our life together during the past strange years, to make her more one with us to-day. Will you not use the empty hours of the long voyage before you in writing out a record of it all for her? I know that you will—and may all

good be with you always, and evil always far away."

Without another word—it was like him—he was gone.

CHAPTER XIX

WALKING slowly down the deserted deck and through the social hall where only a single electric jet was left burning, a piano tempted me, and pressing down the soft pedal I began to dream. I had never before dared to give my thoughts of her full freedom. But now that the past was gone beyond recall, attuned to the dream music, my thoughts set free reveled in sacred memories. Morton had told me once that when he would please her best he played the "Ninth Sonata"; and ever since the two,—that grandest of compositions, "Consolation," and the Woman I worshiped,—had seemed one. What she was among women the "Ninth Sonata" was in music,—a triumphant masterpiece. And it is little wonder that my fingers found it presently, and that the fragrance of the rose without a thorn filled the air with divine vibrations. Over and over the rolling theme stole from the strings, like the swell of the silent sea, bearing

me away on its bosom, singing my sorrow to sleep,—soft, murmuring voice of the deep.

Then suddenly there came over me a feeling which I remembered from those far-away days in the hospital when, before the door opened, I knew that it was she. She entered from the deck, in soft, silver-gray that was almost as simple as the matron's uniform. The low light glistened on her snow-white hair. The radiant beauty of her face outwent all words. And even in that moment I noticed that at last she wore one ornament. Upon her perfect hand was Morton's plain gold ring.

She came toward me, but my fingers still clung to the keys, as if to lose those strains would be to lose her too. Her arms wound gently about my neck, and bending over me she whispered:

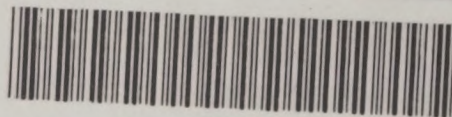
“You did it all for me, because you loved me. Beloved, I can love you now.”

While waiting in the nurses' parlor I had said to myself that if once I could feel her arms, and hear her say those words, I could die in a delirium of joy. But as I sat alone again in the social hall,—alone with the silent piano,—I realized how much better I could *live*, knowing that they both loved me still be-

cause each loved the other better than either could ever have loved me.

So happily, after all, I came to my cabin and began, intending it for her eyes alone, this home-spun record of how Morton discharged the Devil, with what little help a paltry glove-button forced me, unconsciously, to afford him.

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